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THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD:

ALSO,

THE SWISS AND BELGIAN CONFESSIONS AND EXPOSITIONS  
OF THE FAITH.

EDINBURGH :  
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,  
PAUL'S WORK.

THE CHURCH  
OF  
THE LIVING GOD:

ALSO,  
THE SWISS AND BELGIAN  
*Confessions and Expositions of the Faith;*

CONTAINING  
A DISTINCT DELINEATION  
OF EACH AND OF ALL THE VERITABLE DOCTRINES OF THE  
GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD.

PRINTED IN LATIN DURING THE  
TIME OF THE REFORMATION, IN A.D. 1566 AND IN 1582; AND  
TRANSLATED INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN 1862.

BY  
OWEN JONES,  
A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST.

LONDON:  
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1865.



"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."—Ps. lxiii. 1-3.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee,"—ISA. liv. 10.

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—2 TIM. i. 13.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . . And I will raise him up at the last day."—JOHN vi. 47, 54.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."—Ps. cvii. 43.

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PART I.

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD.



## THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD.

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ALTHOUGH there are so many and various sects and denominations of persons professing the Christian religion, yet it is evident, according to the Scriptures, that there is but one true Church,—one fold and one Shepherd, (John x. 16.) And St Paul calleth the Church the house of God, and the Church of the living God; and the pillar and ground, or, as it is in the margin, the stay of the truth, (1 Tim. iii. 15.) Also, it is worthy of our most thankful consideration and remembrance, that Christ himself prayed for the unity of His Church, even as it is recorded in John xvii. And St Paul, speaking of the true Church, saith, “There is one body, and one Spirit,” (Eph. iv. 4;) “for the Holy Spirit dwelleth in the hearts of all the saints,” (1 Cor. vi. 19.) For all the living members of the true Church are sanctified in Christ Jesus, (1 Cor. i. 2,) and justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom. iii. 24.) And St Paul, speaking of the true Church, saith, in Rom. v. 9, 10, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” I observe here that every true member

of the Church of God is regenerated by the Holy Ghost ; that is, he is born again,—born from above,—born of the Spirit,—born of God, (1 Peter i. 23.) And he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, (Gal. vi. 15.) For every member of the true Church hath a twofold birth, and also a twofold life. In respect of their first, or natural birth according to the flesh, they were shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin, and children of wrath even as others. But now, in respect of that spiritual, divine, and heavenly life which God has given to every member of the true Church in regeneration, St Paul, writing to the Ephesian Church, saith, “ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,” &c. (Eph. ii.) For when those lost sinners, who were dead in trespasses and sins, received Jesus Christ, and believed on His name, then they were made the sons of God, and they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, (John i. 12, 13.) And the life which Christ giveth to the penitent, believing soul in regeneration, is eternal life ; because Christ said, in John iv., to the Samaritan woman, “ If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Also, Christ said, “ Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” By living water here is meant the Holy Ghost ; for Christ saith, in John vii. 37-39, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that



believe on him should receive.)” Also, in John vi. 47, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” Also, in ver. 35, Christ saith, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Also, “I am that bread of life.” To the unbelieving Jews Christ said, “Ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me.” And for their encouragement He added, “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Now, every living member of the true Church, finding and feeling himself to be a lost sinner, hath by grace come to Christ by faith and earnest prayer; and Christ hath taken him into His Church, which is His sheepfold. For all men in the world are by nature guilty and lost sinners; but all men do not feel that they are lost sinners by nature and practice; but for all that, they are all of them guilty and lost sinners so long as they are unregenerate; for St Paul saith that by nature both Jews and Gentiles are all under the dominion of sin: as it is written, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” Read Rom. iii. from the 10th to the 18th verse inclusive, and thou shalt there find a correct, true, and scriptural delineation of the state of every unregenerate man in the world.” For the apostle Paul saith, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” And the utter impossibility of salvation by the law is declared in ver. 20; for the apostle saith, “Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” And now, if thou readest from the 21st verse to the end of the same chapter, thou shalt see how lost sinners are saved,—thou shalt see the amazing love of God in saving all them

that believe in Jesus, in justifying them freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; for the penitent, believing sinner is not only justified by God from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, but Christ is of God made to every true penitent, believing sinner, who is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: that according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," (1 Cor. i. 31.) For Jesus Christ himself is the salvation of His Church; for the eternal merit of Christ is given to every member of the Church of Christ, which is His body; for the true Church is the body of Christ, as St Paul declareth in divers places in his epistles; for he saith in 1 Cor. xii. 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular;" also, in Eph. i. 22, 23, it is declared that Christ is "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Now, as it is truly known by the light of the Word of God that no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless he be regenerated, and so made a living member of the Church of God, let every man ask himself these important questions:—Have I been regenerated by the Holy Ghost? Am I born of God? Have I been freely pardoned and justified through faith by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Is the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given unto me? Do I, from the very bottom of my heart, count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus? Am I walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost? Have I truly received that faithful saying, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" And do I truly acquiesce in Him, and rest upon His eternal merit? Am I filled with wonder, love, and praise, on ac-

count of the infinite and unspeakable love of God in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification? Do I love the fellowship and the society and company of the pious and faithful? Am I dead to this world, and are all the feelings of my heart alive unto God? Do I love the Bible? Do I love the gospel? And do I love the holy law of God, although I cannot be justified by it? Have I the faith which worketh by love? Do I feel from that principle of faith and love which God by His Spirit hath implanted within my heart, that out of gratitude I ought to strive to live holily, and to please God more, if I possibly can, than the Church of the first-born under the Old Testament, under the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, seeing that a clearer light and more grace (in one sense of the word) is given to the people or Church of God under the New Testament, although, in both cases, salvation is of grace alone, through Christ alone, and not of works, lest any man should boast? If thou art born of God, thou art a child of God, and an heir of God, and thou shalt overcome the world, and sin, and Satan, through Him that loved thee, and washed thee from thy sins in His own blood; for thou art a member of the true Church, concerning which Christ himself hath said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But let me entreat thee, dear reader, let me urge thee to put this one question to thyself, Am I born again of incorruptible seed by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever?—am I, or am I not? This is an important question, which every man ought seriously to ask himself; for regeneration is the turning-point upon which every man's eternal state, either of endless bliss or of eternal misery, dependeth,—upon which the everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven, or eternal banishment from God, and from the glory of His power into utter darkness, into the fire that never shall be quenched, dependeth.

The absolute necessity of regeneration, or of what is called the new birth, or spiritual birth, is of such infinite importance, that Christ himself, the eternal truth, hath positively declared that, except a man be born again,—that is, born of the Spirit,—he cannot see, he cannot enter, into the kingdom of God, (John iii. 3, 5.) Observe here, that to whatever sect or denomination of Christians any man belongeth, yet if he be not regenerated or born of God, he is not a true Christian, neither can he see the glories of the gospel of Christ, neither is he a living member of the true Church; and although he is an outward member of the Church, yet is he not an inward member of the Church: consequently he belongeth not to the true Church; neither, indeed, is it possible that he should be really a living and a true member of the Church of Christ, until such time as he is born of God, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. For the assembly of the regenerate do compose the house of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. For those which make up the true Church, although they are in this world, yet they are not of the world. For what our Saviour Christ said in relation to His apostles is applicable also to the universal Church of God, which is the assembly of the regenerate. For Christ said unto the Father, “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Also, Christ then prayed, and doth still pray, (for St Paul saith, “He ever liveth to make intercession for them that come unto God by him,”) for the unity, preservation, salvation, and glorification of all the Church. And Christ saith in John xvii. 20–26, “Neither

pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou has sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." And we know that the Father heareth Christ always, for the Scripture saith, "Thou hast given him his heart's desire," &c., (Ps. xxi. 3.) Besides, all power in heaven and earth belongeth to Jesus Christ; but, as our Mediator and Intercessor, He is even at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us, as St Paul saith in Rom. viii. 34. Observe here the amazing love of God to the Church, for it is declared by Christ himself that God hath loved the Church even as He hath loved His Son, (John xvii. 23.) From what has been said, three things are apparent:—1. That there is but one true Church. 2. That the Church is not of the world; for Christ saith, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and St Paul, writing to the churches of Galatia, saith, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," (Gal. iii. 26.) Also, the same apostle, writing to the Church of God at Colosse, whom he calleth saints and faithful brethren in Christ, saith, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ



in God," (Col. iii. 3.) And, 3. It is clear, according to the Scriptures, that the Church of the living God consisteth of all those, and of all those only, who have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost—that is, born again of incorruptible seed by the Word of God, which is the everlasting Gospel, "through the faith of the operation of God," (Col. ii. 12,) by whose grace they have been "justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Rom. iii. 24.) Also, God hath fulfilled in them—that is, in the living members of His Church—His own most gracious declaration as it is written in Jer. xxxi. : "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: . . . for I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (See Heb. viii. 12.) Also, "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Heb. x. 14.) It is also clear that the living members of the Church of God are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, and that they are not of this world, even as Christ himself hath repeatedly declared in the Gospel of St John. Moreover, there is a wide difference between the Church and the world, both as it respects their mental disposition and state of mind towards God, and also their standing, their relation, and their condition in the sight of God. For St John, writing to the Church, saith, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them,"—that is, they have overcome the powers of darkness and the hosts of hell, whom Satan sendeth out to fight against the Church; but the true members of the Church overcome them, because greater is He that is in the children of God than he that is in the world. Observe here that St John calleth the true members of the Church of the living God, "little children," not that the Church of God is composed solely of little children, but because the living members of the Church of God are endued with filial fear and



humility of mind, and sincere love to God; also, they are meek and lowly in heart, they are poor in spirit; and they mourn and are sorrowful if they sin or offend God in anything; and they also strive to please God, and to perfect "holiness in the fear of God," (Matt. v. 3-5; 2 Cor. vii. 1.) For Christ himself called His apostles "little children," although they were grown-up men, (see John xiii. 33.) Furthermore, St John, speaking of those which were not real members of the true Church, saith, "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world; and the world heareth them." And then again, the same apostle, addressing the Church, saith, "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error," (1 John iv. 6;) also, in ver. 13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." And in chap. v. 19, 20, he saith, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." The pious reader will perceive here, according to the declaration of Christ himself, and of the apostle John, that all the true members of the Church of God are in Christ, and Christ is in them now, henceforth, and throughout all eternity, (see John x. 9, 27-29; also John xvii. 20-26; Rom. viii. 35-39.) Also, Moses, celebrating the name of Jehovah, and praising God for His infinite goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness to the Church, saith, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," (Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27;) and in verse 29, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people

saved by the Lord." Also, the prophet Zephaniah, speaking in reference to the loving-kindness of God to the Church, saith, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love ; he will joy over thee with singing," (Zeph. iii. 17.) And the evangelical prophet saith also, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," (Is. liv. 10.) David, also speaking in Ps. cxxxii., saith, "The Lord hath chosen Zion ; he hath desired it for his habitation." And God himself, speaking of His own immutable and everlasting love to the Church, saith, "This is my rest for ever : here will I dwell, for I have desired it." The most sincere and ardent love subsisteth between God and his true Church. For God saith in Deut. xxxii., "The Lord's portion is his people." And every true member of the Church of Christ saith, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup : thou maintainest my lot," (Ps. xvi. 5 ; Lam. iii. 24.) And as every member of the true Church is infinitely dear unto and beloved of God, so God hath endued each believer in Christ with His Holy Spirit, who sheddeth abroad the love of God in their hearts, (Rom. v. 5.) And these feelings of every member of the true Church are set forth in the following words in Ps. lxxiii.:—"O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live : I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness ; and my mouth shall praise with joyful lips : when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore,

in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee : thy right hand upholdeth me." The feeling of the heart of the true Christian towards God is also described in Ps. xlii. and lxxxiv. For David saith, (and it is also the language and the feeling of the heart of every regenerate man,) "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." For the people of God, which is the Church of the living God, are each one and all of them blessed, although in this world they have to pass through very great tribulation, as I shall presently shew. Furthermore, God hath declared by the mouth of his holy prophets, that He giveth His people one heart and one way, (Ps. xxxiii. 15.) And David pronounceth all them truly blessed who seek their happiness in God, saying, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee ; in whose heart are the ways of them." Furthermore, the continuance and perpetuity of each one and of all the members of the Church of the living God, and of their growth in grace, and of their final perseverance in true godliness, are thus declared by the Holy Ghost : "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." And the eternal Spirit declareth the same thing in relation to the vital members of the Church of the living God, saying in David, (Ps. xcii. 13-15,) "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to shew that the Lord is upright : he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." And so we find the Psalmist exhorting the people of God to give thanks unto God for His constancy, and for the immutability of His love to the Church, saying, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ; for his mercy endureth

for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south," (Ps. cvii. 1, 2.) Now, the language of the heart of every true Christian, and of all the regenerate, which is the Church of the living God, is truly and rightly expressed in these words: "I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever," (Ps. cxlv. 1, 2.) The Church is called the city of God in Ps. xlviii. 1: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness." Also, in ver. 8, the prophet declareth the blessed eternity of the Church, saying, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever." And in ver. 14 of this Psalm, the true Church expresseth her faith in the immutability of the love of God towards her, saying, "For this God is our God, for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." From what has been said, the serious and attentive reader will discover that the living members of the Church are not of this world; but they are all of them delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. For the true Church seeketh all her happiness and consolation in God, and in the light of His face. Now, as it is known of an absolute certainty that none can enter into the kingdom of God unless he is a living member of the true Church of the living God, it is incumbent upon every man who is privileged with the gospel to ask himself the question, "Am I a member of the Church of the living God?" or, in other words, "Am I a regenerate man, and a true believer in Jesus Christ? Does Christ dwell in my heart by faith, and by the Holy Ghost?" or thus, "Have I, feeling myself to

be a wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and lost sinner, (Rev. iii. 17,) humbly, and penitently, obediently, and believingly come to Jesus Christ, and entreated Him to save me by His precious blood, and by His eternal merit? And have I in this manner waited upon the Lord Jesus; and hath Christ answered my prayer, and given me His Holy Spirit, and saved me by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost?" If, upon diligent, deliberate, and serious examination of thine own heart, thou canst in spirit and in truth say, "I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry: he brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God," (Ps. xl. 1-3;) and thou canst truly say, from blessed and heartfelt experience, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation," (Isa. xii. 1, 2.) If, in truth and verity, thou canst experimentally say, "I have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," (John i. 45.) And if thou canst humbly, thankfully, and veritably declare, "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me," (Gal. i. 15, 16;) and, "Not by works of righteousness which I have done, but according to his mercy he saved me, by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on me abundantly through Jesus Christ my Saviour," (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) If this be thy experience, then thou art blessed, and thou art a member of Christ himself, and of the Church of the living God, a child of God, an heir of God, concerning whom God hath said, "The mountains shall depart, and the



hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee," (Isa. liv. 10.) But if, on the other hand, and upon mature deliberation and self-examination, thou discoverest that is not the case with thee ; and if thou findest that thou art destitute of unfeigned faith in Christ, and of love to Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, thou mayst not conclude that thou art a living member of the Church of God. Wherefore lose no time, but repent and believe, and obey the gospel ; "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." For St Paul saith, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent," (Acts xvii. 30 ;) and Christ saith, in Mark i. 15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." And St Paul saith that wheresoever he went he preached repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts xx. 21.) And St Peter, in chap. iii. of his second epistle, ver. 9, saith, "The Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." We have given unto us in Scripture, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself, an account of a rich man who, having died without repentance towards God, and without forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, and having died without the merits of Christ, (which are justification, and all fulness, and glorification,) that after death, in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, (Luke xvi. 23.) It appears that this man, thus condemned by the righteous judgment of God, made two requests, both of which were denied to him. Failing to obtain any mitigation of his own torments, he begins to intercede for his brethren ; for he says, "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him [that is Lazarus] to my father's house: for I have five

brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Now, we see by this fearful narration, uttered by the lips of Eternal Truth, even of God manifest in the flesh, the terrible and dreadful end of the impenitent and unbelieving. Also we learn the danger of delay in this momentous concern,—we learn the danger of putting off "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Also we learn the certainty of their eternal damnation (John v. 29) who die impenitent and unbelieving, and without being regenerated, and without having the merits of Christ given unto them. For Christ himself hath said concerning all the impenitent, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," (Luke xiii. 3.) And Christ hath said, "That for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," (Matt. xii. 36.) And Christ himself hath declared that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for those persons who remain impenitent, and reject or slight the everlasting gospel, (see Matt. xi. 20–24.) And yet St Jude saith, "That Sodom and Gomorrha do suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," (Jude 7.) But still the Scripture teacheth us that a sorer punishment even than that of Sodom will be inflicted on those that remain impenitent under the gospel, or that reject, or that despise, or that make light of the gospel. For although it is a glorious truth, that Christ died for the whole world, yet it is equally true that those only are saved by Him who repent and believe the gospel. For the merits of His precious blood and sacrificial death, which are sanctification, justification,

everlasting righteousness, and glorification, even eternal life in bliss and glory everlasting, are given to them only which repent and believe in Him. For St John declareth that there is a very great difference between the Church and the world in the sight of God; for, speaking to the Church, he saith, "We are of God;" and of the world he saith, "The whole world lieth in wickedness"—that is, every impenitent sinner, who hath not truly embraced the everlasting gospel, by true repentance towards God, and by faith in Jesus Christ, doth lie in wickedness, and he is dead in trespasses and sins, and liable to the righteous condemnation of God, so long as he remaineth impenitent; and the condemnation of such a one, and of all such, be they ever so numerous, is increased by this very thing, that the light of the everlasting and glorious gospel of the blessed God is come into the world, and men in general, and hard-hearted sinners in particular, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. And St Paul saith, in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." And yet the same apostle declareth that, before regeneration, those whom he now addresseth as members of the Church of God, had previously been living in the same sins; for, having enumerated a list of sinners, all of whom, without exception, would be excluded from the kingdom of God, addressing the Church of the living God, he saith, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11.) Dear reader, dost thou not now see by this declaration of the apostle the great love of God towards the Church, who, before their conversion

and regeneration, were dead in sins? But God granted them that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, and saved them, according to the Scripture, even by the everlasting merit of Christ; for the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to Titus, saith, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," (Tit. iii. 5-7.) Also the same apostle, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, declareth the lost estate of those by nature—that is, previous to regeneration—who now are vital members of the Church of the living God, which in truth and verity do compose the mystical body of Christ, to whom he saith, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past [that is, antecedent to regeneration] ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires [or wills] of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Observe here, that the apostle declareth that those who are now children of God by union with Jesus Christ, (Eph. i. 5,) were once children of wrath even as others, amongst whom St Paul reckoneth himself. The apostle having declared the universality of human depravity, proceedeth to shew the salvation of God, saying, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew



the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." The apostle, having declared the singular and amazing love of God, in quickening, or, in other words, in giving spiritual life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins, declareth further, that we—that is, the members of the Church of God—are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. From what hath been hitherto declared, it is manifest that the commendation of the good works which the saints perform, rightly appertaineth unto God, by whose grace they who now are living members of the Church received repentance and the Holy Ghost, and were united to Christ by faith unfeigned, which the apostle declareth is of the operation of God, (Col. ii. 12.) And here it is right that we should state that St James speaketh of two sorts of faith: first, he speaketh of true or unfeigned faith, even of the faith which St Peter calleth "precious faith," (2 Pet. ii. 1;) and which St Jude calleth "the faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3,) and which St Paul calleth "faith unfeigned;" for, in his First Epistle to Timothy, he saith, "Now the end of the commandment is charity [or love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," (1 Tim. i. 5.) Also the same apostle, in his Epistle to Titus, calleth this faith unfeigned "the faith of God's elect," saying, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness," (Tit. i. 1.) Also in his Epistle to the Colossians, the same apostle declareth "faith unfeigned" to be of the operation of God; for, addressing the Colossians, he saith, "Ye are buried with him in baptism, [that is, the baptism of the Holy



Ghost,] wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God," (Col. ii. 12.) And St James also first speaketh of this true or unfeigned faith, saying, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" Here St James speaketh of the "true faith." Afterwards he speaketh of that vain and empty faith which the unregenerate have, in ver. 14, saying, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? . . . Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Here St James is speaking of faith such as devils have, and such as all the unregenerate may have who are disobedient to God, and who are destitute of love to God, and of holiness, and of true love to their fellow-creatures, and also of true, unfeigned, and precious faith; for St Paul saith that faith—that is to say, "faith unfeigned"—is the fruit of the Spirit; for in his Epistle to the Galatians he saith, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Observe here that St Paul declareth that faith is the fruit of the Spirit; therefore it must be a good and heavenly gift coming down from heaven, wrought by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe the everlasting, glorious, and holy gospel of God. For St James saith, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," (James i. 17.) Neither ought we to imagine for one moment that St James intended to contradict St Paul when he said, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith [here again he speaketh of unfeigned

faith] wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Who does not perceive that it is the evident intention of the apostle James to elucidate the nature of unfeigned faith, which is always connected with love and obedience to God, of which indeed it is the spring, and also to distinguish this "unfeigned faith," which, as it has been proved by the Scripture to be the gift of God, from that feigned faith, or that cold assent unto the existence of God, and unto the gospel, which is without love to God and obedience to His holy Word, and which is common to the unregenerate, who indeed hear the gospel, but do not embrace it; neither do they repent and believe in Christ unto the saving of their souls? For this sort of faith so common amongst men—I mean unregenerate men—is inferior to the faith of devils; for the devils believe and tremble, but impenitent sinners, who are under the wrath of God, and who ought to tremble because they have so long resisted and made light of the gospel, tremble not. Also St James saith, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, [not intending to contradict St Paul,] when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" Here, again, St James sheweth the nature of true faith, as the pious reader may clearly discern. For St Paul (and there is no doubt but St James did the same according to the Scripture, which cannot be broken) attributeth these good works in both these persons to the unfeignedness of their faith. For St Paul saith, in Heb. xi. 17, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son." Also, in ver. 31 of the same chapter, he saith, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." Having looked at these things, and having endeavoured to reconcile what some may think to be apparent contradictions, (not real, for there are none in the Scriptures of truth, which

cannot be broken,) I come now, by the help of God, to explain the one true or unfeigned faith. First, then, I say that according to Scripture there is but one true and unfeigned faith; for St Paul saith, in Eph. iv. 5, "There is one faith," and this faith unfeigned resteth upon Christ alone, and upon His eternal merit, and upon His eternal word. Also it is the gift of God to the humble and meek, to them who feel that they are in themselves lost sinners, and who truly repent and believe the gospel; for the merits of Christ are given only to them that repent and believe the gospel, (Luke xxiv. 47.) Also it is declared, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." And this Christ doth by the application of the blood of sprinkling, (Heb. xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2,) even His own most precious blood, to the hearts of all true penitents, through the Holy Ghost, (Heb. ix. 14,) who worketh faith in them, (2 Thess. i. 11,) and the knowledge of their acceptance with God through Him, (Eph. i. 6.) For Christ saith, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke xix. 10; Matt. xviii. 11.) For unless a man acknowledgeth and feeleth that he is a lost sinner, he will not and cannot come to Christ; neither indeed is it possible that any impenitent and self-righteous man should receive the merits of Christ, which are forgiveness of sins, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal life. For the merits of Christ, which are what we have just now stated, are given to the poor in spirit, the broken-hearted, even to them who feel that they themselves are lost sinners, and that, unless the merit of Christ is given to them by the Holy Ghost, they must be lost for ever,—unless, I say, Jesus Christ saveth them by His grace through His most precious blood. The Pharisees would not believe that they were lost sinners, and that they themselves deserved hell; and therefore both St John the Baptist, and also our Saviour himself, far more severely

rebuked the impenitent, and self-righteous, and proud, and unbelieving Pharisees, than they did sinners in general; although, indeed, Christ himself denounced the most dreadful judgments upon all and upon each of the despisers and neglecters of the gospel. Observe here that there is no merit in repentance,—no, nor yet in faith; but still God requireth both repentance and faith: for by repentance we mourn before God for our sins, (Zech. xii. 10,) and we abhor ourselves on account of our sins, (Job xlii. 6,) and by true repentance we also forsake our sins and live a new life, (see 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11;) and by faith we come hungry and thirsty to Jesus Christ, and entreat Him to save us by His own eternal merit, even by His grace, through His own most precious blood; and Christ giveth to us, and to all them that come in this way, according as the Scripture setteth forth, the merits of His own most precious blood, which are forgiveness of sins, (Eph. i. 7,) and the Holy Ghost, (Acts ii. 38, John vii., Acts v. 32,) sanctification, everlasting righteousness, (Isa. li. 6, 8,) and eternal redemption, (Heb. ix. 12; 1 Cor. i. 30.) But the Scripture teacheth us that this repentance also is the gift of God to man, for St Paul exhorteth Timothy in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, &c., (2 Tim. ii. 25.) And St Peter saith that God hath with His own right hand exalted Jesus Christ “to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins,” (Acts v. 31.) By what has been said it appeareth that the Church is complete in Christ: “for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” (Col. ii. 9.) And although, previous to repentance, and faith, and regeneration, each and all of the members of the Church were at that time without Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in



the world; yet now, in Christ Jesus, they who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. I here remark that the Church prayeth not only for the members of the Church, but also for their relations and friends which are not yet regenerated, and for the whole world, which lieth in wickedness, (1 Tim. ii. 1-4.) I would here press the necessity there is for every man to ascertain whether he is in the Church or in the world. And this I say, if thou findest that thou art not a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, then lose no time, but draw nigh to God through Jesus Christ, and He will draw nigh to thee. Come unto the throne of grace, that thou mayest obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, (Heb. iv. 16.) To-day, if thou wilt hear His voice, harden not thine heart. For Jesus Christ receiveth sinners still,—yea, even the chief of sinners, for He saith, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light,” (Matt. xi. 28-30.) Seek all thy happiness in Christ, for those who do not make the favour of God and Christ their supreme delight and treasure on earth, shall never enjoy Him in heaven; and it will be no injustice in God to banish them from His blissful presence in heaven who made light of His favour on earth. Oh, therefore, be not content, and do not rest satisfied with being an external member only of the Church; but be zealous and repent, and turn to the Lord by praying, and daily search His Word, and never rest contented until thou findest the Lord, and until He hath saved thee by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Once more, let us behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Never let us take our eyes from Him, but let us view the Lamb in His own light, whom angels



dimly see, and gaze, transported at the sight, to all eternity.

Let us consider what Christ hath purchased, merited, and deserved for lost sinners. I have declared before that the unspeakable, infinite, and eternal merits of Christ are given to those lost sinners who repent and believe in Him. First, then, I say, that Christ hath merited pardon for lost sinners, and reconciliation with God ; and, as St Paul saith, Christ is of God made unto the Church wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Also the same apostle declareth that Christ hath merited eternal life, (Rom. vi. 23.) Christ hath also merited that those whom God justified should also be glorified. The Church of the first-born, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the patriarchs, and Moses and the prophets, were, each and all of them, lost sinners, and saved by the merits of Jesus Christ alone. No one of Adam's lost race ever entered heaven but only by the eternal merit of Christ which was given to them, and in Him the Church possesseth all fulness. For Christ saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." By the sheepfold is meant the Church, and by "the door" is meant Christ. For Christ himself saith, in ver. 9 of the same chapter, "I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." For if a man entereth into the Church for the sake of gain, or emolument, or worldly honour, or ostentation, and does not humbly come by faith unfeigned as a lost sinner to Jesus Christ, to be justified and sanctified, and also to be saved into heaven by the merit and grace of Christ only, then I say that man is not a true Christian ; and so he belongeth not to the family of God, which is the true Church, but the Scripture saith that he is a thief and a robber. For Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ; also Christ saith, He came to

save the lost. Well, then, if a man does not feel, and will not acknowledge, that he is an utterly lost sinner, how can he be saved? For if any man thinketh that, by any amendment of his life, he can make any satisfaction to God for his past sins, this idea is confuted by the Scripture, which saith, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The great sins of the Pharisees appear by Scripture to have been these: self-righteousness, impenitence, and unbelief. And they not only rejected the gospel, but they also hindered others from embracing it; and for this cause Christ denounced eight woes against them for their hypocrisy and blindness, (see Matt. xxiii. 13-36.) It is indeed a great truth that Jesus Christ receiveth sinners, repenting of sins and believing in Him; but it is equally true that those whom He receiveth into the communion of the gospel are made one with Him; and they have a new life given unto them, which new life is the divine nature, (2 Peter iv.; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Eph. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 10; 1 John iii. 2.) For there is great weight and comfort in these words spoken by Jesus Christ himself: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," (John viii. 36.) For St Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, saith, "But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea." For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. For what are all the gracious promises of God but the glories which emanate from the cross of Christ? Furthermore, the apostle saith, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed

us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," (2 Cor. i. 18, 19, 21, 22.) It hath been declared before, according to the Scripture, that there is but one faith, (Eph. iv. 5;) and, according to ecclesiastical history, it is manifest that the true Church or body of Christ—which is the holy assembly of all the regenerate out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people—has held fast this one true and unfeigned faith, which embraceth Christ with all His glorious and unspeakable merits, and with all His unsearchable riches, from the times of the apostles even unto the present day. And indeed the same gospel and the same faith were obscurely preached by God himself immediately after the fall of man, and long before the giving of the law; for Christ saith, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad," (John viii. 56.) Job also (who, according to Scripture chronology, is thought to have lived before Moses) saith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," (Job xix. 25.) Moses is thought to have written the Book of Job whilst he was a stranger in the land of Midian. That the Book of Job is authentic is quite evident, inasmuch as both Ezekiel and St James do make mention of him; and he is supposed to have lived about 1520 years before the incarnation and nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, we shall clearly discover that all the pious in all ages of the world, from righteous Abel unto the apostolic age, embraced Christ as their only Saviour and salvation, expecting eternal life, not through their works, although they lived holily, and feared and loved God, but through the sole merit of Christ alone, who is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, (Rev. xiii. 8.) For St Paul, speaking of the Church of the first-born, and under the Old Testament, saith, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, [that is to say, the accomplish-

ment or fulfilment of the promises,] but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Also, St Paul attributeth all the righteous acts of the people of God to faith; for he declareth that through faith they wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, &c.; and, again, others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection, &c., (Heb. xi.) Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath declared by His servant St Paul, that the members of His Church, which is His body, are all justified by faith; and, also, that they are all sanctified by faith in Him. It is said of Barnabas that he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, (Acts xi. 24.) St Paul, writing to the Church of God at Rome, saith, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. v. 1.) St Paul calleth the Church the household of faith. Observe here that St Paul is not speaking of feigned faith, such as is common to Papists, Pelagians, and to unregenerate men; but he is speaking of "unfeigned faith," which embraceth Christ with all His unsearchable riches and eternal merit, and maketh us one with Christ. St Paul here is not referring to that vain, and carnal, and feigned faith which is common even to the neglecters of the gospel, to unbelievers, and to the profane, and to the teachers of false doctrines, and unto the Papal Antichrist; but St Paul here speaketh of the faith which is of the operation of God, (Col. ii. 12,) and which St Peter calleth "precious faith," (2 Peter i. 1;) and it is exceedingly precious, inasmuch as it embraceth Christ, and His salvation and His righteousness, which is unto all and upon all them that believe, (Rom. iii.) Once more, here we must observe that the salvation which unfeigned believers



in Christ receive, is an eternal salvation; for Christ saith, "My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished," (Isa. li. 6.) Furthermore, Christ hath declared that the true believer in Him hath everlasting life, (John vi. 47;) also He hath declared that he shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life, (John v. 24.) Now let us turn to Acts xxvi., and we shall find that the Church, which is called the bride, the Lamb's wife, in Rev. xix. 7, and xxi. 9, is sanctified by faith, (Acts xxvi. 18.) For when St Paul was brought before Agrippa, and made his defence, and related his miraculous conversion, and the glorious appearance of Christ, in brightness and splendour far transcending the meridian sun, amongst other things he declareth the commission given to him by the Lord Jesus, in Christ's own words, which are as follow:—"Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Here we discover, by the words of Christ himself, that the Church is sanctified by faith in Him. And this faith is of the operation of God, (Col. ii. 12,) which St Peter calleth "precious faith," and which St Jude calleth "the faith once delivered unto the saints," and also "most holy faith." This is the faith of which St Paul saith, "There is one faith," (Eph. iv. 5.) Also this is the faith to which the apostle Paul referreth in his Epistle to the Romans, whom he thus addresseth:—"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my



God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world"—that is, through all Christian churches in the world, (Rom. i. 7, 8.) Moreover, this is the faith which St Paul referreth to when he saith, "God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith," (Rom. xii. 3.) By the words "every man" in this place are not meant every man in the world, but every man in the Church of God; for in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians he saith, "All men have not faith," (2 Thess. iii. 2;) and truly, if all men had this faith, this precious faith, this faith unfeigned, this most holy faith, this sanctifying faith, this faith which is of the operation of God, which embraceth Christ with all His merits, then, in that case, all men would be saved by the merit of Christ which faith receiveth; but the Scripture declareth "all men have not faith." It is said in Scripture, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them," (Ps. cxlv. 18, 19.) And in Ps. cxxxviii., the Psalmist saith, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off." For those persons who believe in Christ are humble, and lowly, and meek, and their faith and hope is in God. But the proud do not believe in Christ with their hearts unto righteousness, so as to love Him; but they believe in themselves, and in their performances; or, even if they say that they believe in Christ, theirs is only "feigned faith;" for a proud man cannot receive Christ, for he is full of self and self-sufficiency. For even our Lord Jesus Christ himself thus addressed the Laodicean Church:—"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be

rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent," (Rev. iii. 17-19.) And here I observe that, by "gold tried in the fire," Christ meaneth "faith unfeigned," precious faith, which receiveth and embraceth Christ, who is our eternal life, with all His spiritual blessings which He hath merited by His incarnation, and by His sufferings, and by the blood of His cross, (Col. i. 20 ; 1 John v. 20.) Concerning which faith St Peter, writing to those who were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, saith, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter i. 7.) For those who, having felt that they were lost sinners as it respects themselves, and as such having mourned and lamented on account of their sins against God, and having by faith received Jesus Christ, do now truly love and esteem Jesus Christ above all things in this world ; also they seek all their happiness in Him, and in endeavouring to please Him, and to serve Him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of their life ; not that they for a moment imagine that by their holiness, and by their obedience to God, they merit eternal life ; no, that is by no means the case with respect to those who are endued by God with "faith unfeigned," (1 Tim. i. 5, 2 Tim. i. 5,) which is of the operation of God, (Col. ii. 12,) which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. xii. 9,) and of which Jesus is the author and finisher, (Heb. xii. 2 ;) but they strive to please God out of gratitude and love to Him who hath saved them, and called them with an holy calling ; not according to their works, but according to

God's own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, (2 Tim. i. 9.) For St Paul saith, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," (Tit. iii. 5-7,) "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," (Tit. i. 2.) For eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, given to all them who truly repent and unfeignedly believe in Jesus. For eternal life was bought, and merited by Jesus Christ, even by His most precious blood; hence the apostle Paul calleth the eternal inheritance (Heb. ix. 15) the purchased possession, in Eph. i. 14, unto the praise of His glory. For the eternal inheritance is not merited by the holiness and piety of the saints, after they are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; but it was purchased by the blood of the Lamb, in the same way as pardon and sanctification of the Spirit, and perseverance in righteousness and true holiness even unto the end, was merited and purchased by the precious blood of the Lamb of God; and the merits of the blood of the Lamb, which are justification, forgiveness of sins, and sanctification, and perseverance in righteousness and in true holiness, and eternal life in the world to come, are freely given to each one and to all of the regenerate, or, which is the same thing, to all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the everlasting and glorious gospel of the blessed God. For St Paul attributeth perseverance in holiness and in the love of God to the sole merits of Christ, which is made ours through "the faith of the operation of God," which He calleth "unfeigned faith." Moreover, the same apostle declareth that Christ hath merited and deserved

that nothing should be able to separate the Church—that is, the saints, or the regenerate—from God; for he saith, in Rom. viii. 35–37, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.” How so? Through ourselves? through our own holiness? Through the ability, or, I might rather say, the debility of the human will? Oh no; no such thing; but through Him that loved us we are more than conquerors, even as the apostle declareth. For it is Christ who maketh us holy by imparting to us His Divine nature, and so maketh us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. i. 12.) Also, St Peter blesseth God for His mercy to the Church; for he saith, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” St Peter here is not speaking of “feigned faith,” which resteth on self, but he is speaking of “unfeigned faith,” which is of the operation of God, and which resteth on Christ alone, and which embraceth Christ with all His merits. For those who truly know Christ by faith unfeigned, do also love Him supremely, although they have not seen Him; for St Peter, writing to the Church, that is, “the regenerate,” saith, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls,” (1 Pet. i. 8, 9.) I observe here

that St Peter declareth that those who truly believe in Jesus Christ do receive the salvation of their souls, inasmuch as it is by faith unfeigned that we receive Christ with all His unsearchable riches, and with all His infinite and eternal merits. St Paul saith, "There is one faith," (Eph. iv. 5.) And in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he saith, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: let all your things be done in love," (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) Also, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he declareth that Christ hath ordained apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of "the faith;" and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love, (Eph. iv. 11-16.) For Christ is the life, light, and salvation of every true believer in Him. This is clear, according to Scripture; for David saith, and the true Church saith, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," (Ps. xxvii. 1.) And Job saith, "He also," that is Christ, "shall be my salvation," (Job xiii. 16.) Moses saith, "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt him," (Exod. xv. 2.) This is the language of faith unfeigned; for precious faith receiveth Christ, who is our life, light, and salvation; and all those who are possessed



of "faith unfeigned" have endeavoured, by true humility, lowliness, and meekness of spirit to prepare their hearts for an habitation for God the Saviour to dwell in. For Isaiah saith, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." David also, in Ps. cxlvii. 5, draweth a contrast in respect of the dealings of God towards two opposite sorts of sinners; for he saith, "The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground;" and in Ps. x. 4, he saith, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." But in Ps. cxlvii. 3, the Psalmist saith, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds;" and in ver. 11, he saith, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy." Also, in Ps. cxlix. 4, he saith, "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." Also, David saith, in Ps. cxviii. 14, "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation;" and ver. 21, he saith, "I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation." This is the language of the heart of humble souls, of those who have felt themselves lost sheep, of the meek, of the lowly in heart, of the poor in spirit, and of the contrite heart, and of the penitent and of the mourning souls, to whom Christ hath given "gold tried in the fire," that is, "faith unfeigned;" and the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them, (Rom. v. 5.) David saith, in Ps. xxxiv. 6, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." In very many places in Scripture doth the Holy Ghost reveal to us the displeasure and wrath of God against proud sinners; and, on the other hand, the willingness of God to save and to reveal Himself to the humble. Now, as it respecteth the proud, St

James saith, "God resisteth the proud," (James iv. 6;) and St Luke saith, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," (Luke i. 51.) And Solomon saith, "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud," (Prov. xv. 25.) Also, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," (Prov. xvi. 18.) The pride of man is particularly seen in this, that he refuseth to acknowledge himself a lost sinner, although, indeed, it must come to that point with him before he can be saved: for Christ came to save lost sinners, (Luke xix. 10; 1 Tim. i. 15.) It is clear, according to Scripture, that the great sins of the Pharisees were pride, hardness of heart, and unbelief, unto whom Christ said twice, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins: and whither I go, ye cannot come," (John viii. 21.) And these, and many others, are the great sins of the present day. For although the true Church is sanctified in Christ Jesus, yet the men of this world—that is, the unregenerate—are not better now than they were in the age of the apostles. For St Paul saith to Timothy, "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away," (2 Tim. iii. 1-5.) This is what St Paul hath predicted should be the state of things in the last days, which the apostle calleth "perilous times." And that this is the state of things in the present day is apparent to all who reflect upon these things. Look at the fearful profaneness, contempt of God's Word, and worldliness, and neglect of the gospel, and the slighting of the Divine mercy, and the non-appreciation of the salvation of God and of Christ, which pervadeth all ranks and degrees of men. Look at those vast

numbers of persons who attend theatres, playhouses, and opera-houses, all of whom are under the influence of Satan, who is the god of this world, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Oh, that such persons would consider that for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. And the Scripture saith, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall weep." It is verily a great mercy that the Bible is so much circulated in this island; yet the number of those who truly believe in Jesus Christ with an unfeigned faith, appears to us to be but a small number compared to the vast numbers of those which reject the gospel. And here it is right to state, that all those who have embraced the gospel of salvation, and are in Christ, do esteem the gospel of God and Christ above all things, for they seek all their joy and happiness in God, and in Christ, and in the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and they endeavour to keep their hearts with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, (Prov. iv. 23.) But whilst they bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and endeavour to please God, they do not place confidence in these things, but in Christ alone, who is their strength and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, (1 Cor. i. 30;) and their faith and hope is in God, (1 Pet. i. 21.) For faith unfeigned worketh by love, (Gal. v. 6.) And St Peter, in a general council of the apostles and elders, who were assembled together to consider one of the most fundamental and essential doctrines of the Christian faith, saith, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe; and God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith," (Acts xv. 7-9.) Here, again, we find that sanctifying, unfeigned faith is the gift of God to men through the

Holy Ghost ; and also, that it purifieth the hearts of the members of the Church. And in ver. 11, the same apostle, declaring the nature of true faith, saith, " We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they : whereupon it is quite clear, according to the apostolical declaration, that the Jewish Church and the Gentile Church are one family of God in Christ, being justified and sanctified by faith : and saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is right, also, here, that we should distinguish between the " faith unfeigned " which embraceth Christ our righteousness, and which was once delivered to the saints by Jesus Christ, and " feigned faith," which is common to the unregenerate in the present day. And, first, I observe that faith unfeigned is the gift of God to the humble and meek : for St James saith that God giveth grace unto the humble, and without faith there can be no grace : for without faith it is impossible to please God. But now we must delineate and describe faith unfeigned by its salutary, sanctifying, and spiritual and saving effects upon the spirits, souls, and hearts and minds of men. First, then, those humble souls who do unfeignedly believe in Jesus Christ, have everlasting life, (see John vi. 47-58 ;) they have eternal life, not through their own merit, certainly not, but through the sole, infinite, and eternal merit of Jesus Christ the Son of God. . . . Now let us look at the effects of faith unfeigned upon humble, holy souls. By faith unfeigned, humble souls become dead to the world, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is, indeed, the life of them that believe in Him ; by faith unfeigned in Christ, though they have not seen Christ, yet they love Him ; by " faith unfeigned," humble and penitent, and regenerate men, of which verily all the true Church consisteth, do rejoice in Christ Jesus with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Also, they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls ; for " unfeigned faith " embraceth



Christ our righteousness, (Rom. x. 4;) for He hath made Him to be sin, (that is, a sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering,) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, (2 Cor. v. 21.) It is by "faith unfeigned" that we renounce ourselves, (as it respects placing any confidence in ourselves;) and it is by "faith unfeigned" that we overcome the flesh, and the devil; and it is by "faith unfeigned" that we seek all our enjoyment, all our felicity and delight, and all our satisfaction and peace, and rest, and consolation, and recreation, and happiness in God the Father, who hath loved us, for in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him; and in God the Son, who made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and hath purchased our pardon, and us, too, with His own most precious blood: and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and in God the Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter, who sealeth the truths of the gospel upon our hearts, and applieth the blood of the Lamb to our hearts and to our souls. Also, it is by "faith unfeigned" that we worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, (Phil. iii. 3.) St Paul also saith that Christ is the author, or, as it is the marginal reading, the "beginner" of our faith, (Heb. xii. 2.) St John saith, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," (1 John v. 4;) and it is by "faith unfeigned" that we receive Christ, who is our Saviour, and our eternal salvation, and the one pearl of great price, and who is our eternal life; and in comparison of whom we count all worldly



things but loss, for St Paul saith, (and that is also the feeling and the language of every true believer,) “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, (Phil. iii. 8; Matt. xiii. 46.) For we know by the experience of the verity of the Word of God, and through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, and which sealeth us, (Eph. i. 13;) and which beareth witness unto the truth of the Word of God, that Jesus Christ is our peace, (Eph. ii. 14,) our wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, (1 Cor. i. 30;) also, He is our life, (Col. iii. 4,) our strength, (Phil. iv. 13,) our exceeding joy, the health of our countenance, and our God, (Ps. xliii. 4, 5;) also, He is our shield and our exceeding great reward, (Gen. xv. 1;) also, He is our light and our salvation, and the strength of our life, (Ps. xxvii.) Therefore, also the true Church saith of Christ, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee: my flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,” (Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.) For Christ hath merited by His own most precious blood, pardon and eternal life for guilty, wretched, poor, miserable, and lost sinners; and this pardon and this eternal life, which Christ alone hath merited, is given to each and to all those guilty, wretched, poor, miserable, and lost sinners which receive Him, which believe in Him, and which do truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel. And it is the Holy Ghost that applieth the merits of the blood of Christ to the consciences of penitent believers, by which blood they are justified, as St Paul testifieth in Rom. v. 9; also by the merit of the blood of Christ they are glorified: for St Paul saith, in Rom. viii., “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” For Jesus Christ alone—not the saints, who are the regenerate and the true Church of God, but Jesus Christ alone hath merited, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor princi-

palities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Now the saints, that is, the regenerate, (which compose the true Church, which is the body of Christ, and is also the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife,) do ascribe their continuance in the Divine favour, and their perseverance in faith, and hope, and love, and in true holiness, not to themselves or to their own power, (2 Cor. i. 9, 10;) but unto the sole merit of Christ alone, who by His own most precious blood hath merited for His Church, and for all them that repent and believe in Him, both pardon and perseverance in holiness, and life eternal; whereupon it followeth, that inasmuch as the infinite and eternal merit of Christ is given unto the regenerate, their eternal life is certain, for Jesus Christ hath merited that the regenerate should persevere in faith unfeigned, and in true holiness; for so Christ himself, who is the eternal truth, hath declared, saying, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," (John x. 27, 28.) Now, those humble souls who mourn for sin, and acknowledge that by nature they are lost sinners, and who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ, and have felt the efficacy of His precious blood, and who unfeignedly believe in Jesus Christ, do also believe that they have eternal life through the merit of Christ, according to the declaration of Christ himself; and whilst they endeavour, out of grateful love to God for His great salvation, to please Him, and to live holily, and godlily, and righteously in this present world, they do not expect for a moment that by these things they merit anything, but they

trust in the eternal merit of Christ only; for each and all of the members of the Church militant here on earth do confess that Christ is their righteousness, according to the declaration of the evangelical prophet, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: also, surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that were incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," (Isa. xlv. 17, 24, 25.) Also, "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," (Isa. liv. 17.) For all humble and faithful souls always did, and do now, and ever will ascribe their salvation to Jesus Christ, who is the captain of their salvation, who is made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, constituted and ordained with an oath by Him that said unto Him, "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," (Heb. v. 6, 10, vi. 20, vii. 21, 28,) who once suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness: to Him "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25,) "even to Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. i. 10,) and to the eternal Father, the Father of mercies, and to God, the Holy Ghost, the blessed and eternal Comforter, and Sanctifier of all them that believe in Jesus Christ; and the apostle Paul, after proving by Holy Scripture that the salvation and glorification of the Church are altogether, from first to last, of grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, filled with wonder, love, and praise, breaketh forth into that comprehensive and most appropriate doxology, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.) Also, St John the divine ascribeth his own salva-

tion and the salvation of the Church to Jesus Christ alone, saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings, and priests unto God, and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Furthermore, as all humble and meek souls, and all the lowly in heart, and faithful souls, and the regenerate and all-suffering saints, who make up the Church militant on earth, do ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb, even so it is in heaven; for St John saith, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," (Rev. vii. 9-17.) Here we clearly see that the whole multitude of the regenerate—that

is, of the living—members of the Church triumphant in glory, from the very beginning of the world even unto the end thereof, do ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb, like as do also the whole Church militant on this earth, who, whilst they pass through great tribulation through this vale of tears, mingle their praises to Him, together with prayers, and sighs, and tears ; yet the true Church of the living God, from generation to generation,

“ And through the ages all along,  
Do sing the same celestial song :  
‘ Praise to thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’ ”

For all the regenerate—that is, all the living members of the true Church, which is the body of Christ, are all partakers of the Divine nature, (2 Pet. i. 4,) and living temples of the Holy Ghost, (2 Tim. i. 14 ; ) and the same celestial and spiritual life and love which animateth the Church in glory, which have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony (Rev. xii. 11) animateth also (though not, indeed, to that degree) the Church militant here in her sorrowful pilgrimage ; for the Church of God, which are the regenerate, are persecuted by the unregenerate, and harassed, and terrified, and worried by Satan, as St Paul saith, and Bunyan in his “ Holy War.” And oftentimes the regenerate are in deep distress, for they have two nativities and two natures—the divine, consequent upon regeneration, and the carnal, which they had naturally ; and there is an internal conflict between the two natures, as St Paul declareth in Rom. vii. ; but the victory appertaineth to the regenerate through the blood of the Lamb, although in this world there is a great internal conflict, and they often mourn and sigh. For the evangelical prophet declareth, in reference to the Church—that is, the regenerate—“ The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and ever-



lasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," (Isa. xxxv. 10 ;) and it is with the regenerate, as St Paul saith, " As chastened and not killed, as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," (2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) But Christ is the life of all the saints in heaven, and of all and of each of the saints on earth. This St Paul declareth in sundry places in his Epistle to the Ephesians and elsewhere, (Eph. ii. 19, and iii. 15 ; Col. iii. 4.) Also the people of God, amidst all their afflictions, persecutions, temptations and deep distresses, trials and tribulations, do yet perceive that they have a heavenly life within them, and that Christ is in them the hope of glory, and also that He is their strength, and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, (1 Pet. i. 5.) I observe here, that the true Church blesseth and praiseth God continually, notwithstanding that she passeth through floods of sorrow and seas of grief, and notwithstanding the tremendous assaults and fiery darts of Satan, who, like a roaring lion, terrifieth the sheep of Christ. This is permitted by Jesus Christ for wise purposes for a time ; but although Satan and his emissaries, visible and invisible, are allowed to distress and worry the sheep, he is not allowed to destroy and to devour the sheep. The object of the devil is to get the sheep to disbelieve the Bible, which is the Word of truth, and to surrender the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, (Eph. vi. 17 ;) which object he may in some instances be allowed so far to attain as to bring the Christian into such a state of mind for a time as none but they who have to pass through it, and to combat with Satan and the combined powers of darkness, can possibly conceive. For David saith, " The enemy hath persecuted my soul : he hath smitten my life down to the ground : he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead : therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me : my heart within me is deso-

late," (Ps. cxliii. 3, 4.) And this might be the experience, more or less, of many a Christian besides David. In his distress David prayed to the Lord, who soon turned his prayer into praise, (see Ps. cxxxviii. 1-3, also see Ps. xxx. 1-12, also Ps. xxxiv. 1-4.) For St Paul exhorteth the Church to put on the whole armour of God, in order that all the members of the Church might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for he declareth that the Church wrestleth against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against wicked spirits in high places, (see Eph. vi. 10-18.) Also the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his servant John to write unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, as followeth:—"These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death," (Rev. ii. 8-11.) Observe here, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ pronounceth the Church of Smyrna rich, notwithstanding her tribulation and poverty—that is, rich in "faith unfeigned," which maketh us one with Christ; for St James saith, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James ii. 5.) St Luke declareth that Paul and Barnabas, after they had preached the gospel at Derbe, turned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the

faith, [that is, 'faith unfeigned,' which apprehendeth Christ, and His eternal merit,] and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," (Acts xiv. 21, 22.) I observe here, that the Holy Scriptures have drawn a distinct line between the Church of the living God and the world. For Christ is the Head of the Church, and the good Shepherd, and He is the Saviour of the body, the Church, and all the sheep of Christ have entered into the sheepfold, or Church of God, by the door, Christ Jesus; "and the sheep hear the voice of Christ: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out," (John x. 2, 3.) For Christ is that good Shepherd, "who laid down his life for the sheep," (John x. 15;) and "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen," (Gal. i. 4 5.) Also, Christ saith, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," (John x. 11.) Also, Christ saith, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep," (ver. 14-16.) For Christ delivereth His sheep from the powers of darkness, by opening "the eyes of their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures," (Luke xxiv. 45.) Also, St Paul saith, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) It is also declared, that when Christ "putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice," (John x. 4.) For the sheep cannot do anything without Christ, (John xv. 5.) This the sheep of Christ know, therefore they pray to Him continually; for Satan, who goeth about as a roaring lion, terrifieth and worrieth the sheep, although he cannot destroy them; but when Christ

exerteth His omnipotent power, He scattereth and putteth to flight the powers of darkness ; as it is written "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered : let them also that hate him flee before him," (Ps. lxxviii. 1.) Also, St Paul saith, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," (Rom. xvi. 20.) Christ saith concerning His sheep, that "a stranger will they not follow : for they know not the voice of strangers," (John x. 5.) By strangers here, we are to understand the false prophets or teachers, who are gone out into the world, (1 John iv. 1,) which do not lead men to Christ, but from Him. For these teachers here referred to by Jesus Christ, were never regenerated or born of God ; consequently, they are strangers to themselves and to Jesus Christ, and unto His glorious gospel : and St Paul, also speaking of those false teachers, of which there were many in his day, warneth Titus concerning them, for the apostle saith, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," (Tit. i. 10, 11.) But now, in respect of those true teachers of the gospel of God in faith and verity, they are all regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and they have entered into the sheepfold, which is the Church of the living God, by the door Christ Jesus. Such are true teachers and pastors, and to each of these that saying of Christ's is applicable, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth ; and the sheep hear his voice," (John x. 3.) To Him the porter openeth : that is, the hearing ear, and the spiritual understanding, which Christ hath given unto His sheep, enable them to discern, approve of, and receive the doctrine of the gospel, which those true pastors teach, "who have been saved by the washing of regeneration and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Tit. iii. 5.) So that there is a mutual agreement and consent of faith between the pastor and the sheep ; for

both are illuminated and sanctified by the same Spirit, and all true believers are of one heart and soul, and they each and all see light in God's light, as it is written, "For with thee is the fountain of life: and in thy light shall we see light," (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) For all the sheep of Christ, both ministers, and every living member of the Church of the living God, have entered into the sheepfold by Christ Jesus; for Christ saith, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture," (John x. 9.) The people of God, the sheep, do feed in the same pasture. That pasture on which they feed is the Bible, the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. Here they find spiritual sustenance when they go into the house of God; and when they come out, they still find pasture in the Word of God. The sheep are never tired of feeding here, nor do they ever wish for any other spiritual pasture but what is found here. The longer and the more they feed in this pasture, the better they like it, and the more they love it; and therefore we hear one of the sheep saying, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" And this is also the language of the heart of all the sheep of Christ, which are the regenerate; for God saith, "I will give them one heart and one way; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jer. xxxi. 33.) Job also, in his distress—another of Christ's afflicted sheep—saith, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," (Job xxiii. 12;) and David saith, "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day," (Ps. cxix. 97;) and in verse 72, he saith, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver:" also, "My soul fainteth for Thy salvation, but I hope in Thy word," (ver. 81.) And, as it respecteth the immutability and stability of the divine word, he saith in verse 89,



“For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven ;” and in verse 127 he saith, “Therefore I love thy commandments above gold ; yea, above fine gold ;” and in Psalm xix, the prophet declareth, “that the law,” or, as it is in the marginal reading, “the doctrine of the Lord is perfect, converting [or restoring] the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes : the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever : the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.” Also, Jeremiah saith, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them : and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart,” (Jer. xv. 16.) “For by the Word of God, the sheep of Christ are nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto by the grace of God they have attained,” (1 Tim. iv. 6.) For Christ saith, “I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” (John x. 11.) The sheep of Christ are all those that repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and the eternal merit of Christ is given to all that unfeignedly believe in Christ. Also, Christ saith, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine,” (John x. 14.) It is through the Holy Ghost that the sheep know Christ, (Acts ii. 38.) St Paul, making a quotation out of Isaiah, saith, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ;” he addeth also, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10 ; ) and speaking of the true Church, he saith, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God : that we might know the things that are freely

given to us of God," (ver. 12.) By these, and by very many more scriptures, which might be brought forward, it is quite clear, according to the declarations of Christ, that the true Church of God in all ages is not of this world; and St Paul, in this chapter especially, as he doth also in very many other places, sheweth unto us the vast difference there is, and, as it were, draweth a contrast between, the Church of the living God and the unregenerate, of which the world is composed. For, speaking of the unregenerate, he saith, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (ver. 14.) But speaking of the regenerate, who are called the faithful, (Rev. xvii. 14,) also the bride, the Lamb's wife, (Rev. xxi. 9,) which is the Church of the living God, he saith, "But he that is spiritual, [that is, regenerated, or born again: born from above, born of the Spirit, born of God,] discerneth all things; yet he himself is discerned of no man," (1 Cor. ii. 15.) I have considered it right to bring forth these several passages out of the Holy Scriptures, which do abundantly prove to us that the Church of God is a spiritual body, and not of this world; their life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is the life of the Church, shall appear, then shall the Church also appear with Him in glory, (Col. iii. 3, 4.) And St John the divine, writing to the Church, saith, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure," (1 John iii. 1-3.) Having, it is to be hoped, proved by the Holy Scriptures, the blessed

estate of the Church, and her union with Christ, and the sanctifying nature of "faith unfeigned," which disclaimeth self, and maketh Christ her true resting-place, and peace and joy and consolation, it is right also that we should glance at feigned faith, which setteth up self, and trusteth in self; and albeit it maketh a profession of the Christian religion, yet it is true of those whose faith is feigned, that they draw nigh unto God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. And in very deed there is no sincerity in man until such time as he is saved by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost: for Christ saith, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin; and the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," (John viii. 34-36.) Now I pray that it may please God to give to all those who as yet are unregenerate, true repentance towards Him, and faith unfeigned in Christ Jesus, which faith unfeigned is called by Christ himself, "gold tried in the fire," that they might be rich, rich in faith unfeigned, which embraceth and receiveth Christ and His eternal merit, and which maketh them heirs of His eternal and glorious kingdom. Now I humbly and fervently pray that God might be pleased to bring in those into His Church by the door Christ Jesus, who at present are afar off; and I pray that those who have not obtained salvation, may obtain eternal salvation; and that those who are not the people of God might be made the children of the living God, by faith unfeigned in Christ Jesus. For "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe," (Gal. iii. 22.) God hath ordained only one way of saving sinners, and that one way is by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Tit. iii. 5,) and by justifying humble sinners freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in

Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. This, and this only, is the way in which God saveth sinners; this is the ancient and true way, even from the beginning of the world when Adam fell; and this is the way, and the eternal counsel of God, even before the foundations of the world were laid; and this also is the new and living way, (Heb. x. 20.) This is the way—that is, through the eternal merit of Christ—in which, and by which, the general assembly and Church of the first-born were saved; this is the ancient, and yet the ever new and living way in which, and by which, the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs, and the holy Church throughout all the world, have been saved, even by faith in Him—the eternal merit of Christ being given to each and all of them. And of the glorified saints in heaven, it might truly be said that—

“Once they were mourners here below,  
And pour’d out cries and tears;  
They wrestled hard as we do now  
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

“I ask them whence their victory came:  
They, with united breath,  
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,  
Their triumph to His death.”

But now their sufferings are over, and they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, (Rev. vii. 15.) Now, as the Holy Scriptures do veritably teach us, that there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, and one Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter, and the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, who sanctifieth and giveth to all the Church

the eternal merit of Christ ; and also, like as they do teach us that there is one Church of the living God, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord Jesus Christ, who is the good and great Shepherd of the sheep, and the supreme and only Head of the Church, which is His body, and of which He is the life and the Saviour, (Eph. v. 23 ;) and as they do teach us that there is but one faith, which is in Christ Jesus, by which men are sanctified, (Acts xxvi. 18,) and have eternal life, (John vi. 47-54 ;) and as they do teach us that there is but one glorious gospel of Christ, (2 Cor. iv. 4)—one orthodox and true doctrine, concerning the Christian religion, which true doctrine hath been set forth by Christ himself, and by his apostles ; so also the Holy Scriptures do declare unto us that even in that age in which Christ lived on this earth, and also in the apostolical age, there were teachers of false doctrines, who taught things contrary to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. For St Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, saith, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel : which is not another ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God ? or do I seek to please men ? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal



riched by Jesus Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge, and who, by the Holy Ghost, was possessed of an orthodox and spiritual understanding of the mystery of Christ, (Eph. iii. 4,) and to whom was given the grace to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, (ver. 8,) formed a very different opinion and judgment concerning those who in his day endeavoured to pervert the gospel of Christ, and who taught false doctrines, to what is entertained in the present day by those who connive at and view with apathy and indifference the unscriptural doctrines; doctrines, I say, highly derogatory to the infinite grace, to the eternal merit, and immortal majesty of Jesus Christ, which are taught by men (not instructed by the word of truth and by the Holy Ghost) in the present day. And these doctrines, being opposed to the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ alone, are also injurious to men, and insulting to the majesty of God. The pious, humble, and prayerful, and attentive Christian reader of the Holy Scriptures will doubtless perceive that St Paul, being inspired by the Holy Ghost in the writing of all his epistles, has written the epistles to the Romans and Galatians in a very animating and argumentative style, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, confuting, by the sword of the Spirit, by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, the impious and vain objections of the adversaries of the truth, and of the gainsayers; and shewing, by spiritual and incontrovertible and Scriptural arguments, that the salvation of the Church from the beginning of the world, and throughout all ages, and even unto the end of the world, is of Christ, "and through Christ, and to Christ: to whom be glory for ever. Amen," (Rom. xi. 36.) Also, the same

questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith ; so do. Now, the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned : from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling ; desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm," (1 Tim. i. 3-7.) For St Paul was exceedingly concerned and anxious that the truth of the gospel should continue in the Church (Gal. ii. 5) in his own day, and carefully conveyed and transmitted to posterity, and to ages to come. This is evident ; for, writing to Timothy, he saith, "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," (2 Tim. ii. 1, 2.) Observe here St Paul's exhortation and charge to Timothy—he was not to be led astray by false teachers, and he was not to teach anything new ; but he was to teach that which he had heard and had learned of St Paul, which is comprehended in the fourteen epistles written by St Paul. Also, the same apostle, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, saith, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. i. 13.) And here it is right to state that the regenerate, and true preachers and teachers of the gospel of God, do not preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, (2 Cor. iv. 5.) But the false teachers, which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine of St Paul, do not serve nor preach our Lord Jesus Christ ; but they preach themselves, and Pelagianism, Socinianism, and Popery, which (as a godly divine saith) is the smoke which arose from the bottomless pit, by which the sun and the air have been darkened, (Rev. ix. 2.) That is to say, the abundance of heresies and errors, which were forged in hell by Satan, and through the medium of false, carnal, and un-

regenerate, and covetous teachers, darken Christ the Sun of righteousness, and the celestial atmosphere of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Not that Satan and his numerous agents and emissaries can overturn the gospel, but they darken it, and pervert it, as St Paul declareth, (Gal. i. 7.) But yet all that truly receive the gospel and believe in Christ, do enter into rest, (Heb. iv. 3,) although indeed, as the Holy Ghost declareth in Acts xiv., "it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God." But it is a great mercy that all the living members of the Church "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," (1 Pet. i. 5.) In the age of the apostles, it was reckoned a great sin to preach false doctrines; but now, in this age in which we live, doctrines—most inimical to the gospel and to true piety; doctrines most dishonourable to God the Father of glory, and to Jesus Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, and to the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit, the most divine and blessed Comforter—are preached; and to connive at and countenance these things, although they are so very injurious to men, is called by some charity and catholicity. But those persons who in the present day can behold with the utmost apathy and unconcern the insults offered to Jesus Christ, and to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the vast injury done both to the Church and also to the world by the teachers of Pelagianism, and Popery, and Puseyism, do clearly shew that they differ widely from St Paul, and Peter, and John, all of whom cautioned the Church against false teachers. And yet these servants of God were not deficient in charity, and in the saving and true knowledge of the gospel, for they had the mind of Christ; for St Paul, addressing the Corinthian Church, saith, "But we [that is, including himself, with the whole Church of the living God throughout the world who are regenerated or

born of God,] have the mind of Christ." And, writing to Titus in reference to preserving the gospel, and preaching it in its purity, and as to the necessary qualifications of a bishop, he also saith, that "a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he might be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," (see Tit. i. 7-9.) For it must be evident to every reflecting Christian that St Paul did not think it a venial or a small sin to pervert the gospel by teaching false doctrines; for, writing to the Galatians in reference to this very thing, and speaking of the false teachers, he saith, "But he that troubleth you shall bear his own judgment, whosoever he be," (Gal. v. 10.) And in verse 12 he saith, in reference to false teachers, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." By these severe expressions the apostle might not mean that these adversaries of the gospel of Christ should be cut off by death, temporal and spiritual, but that their mouths might be stopped, as he saith in Tit. i. 11, and that they might be prevented from teaching in the Church things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake—that is to say, doctrines adverse to the gospel, dishonourable to God, and injurious to the Church and also to the world; because if even a worldly man were to receive their corrupt and unscriptural doctrine, it would not save him; but if any man receiveth the glorious gospel of the blessed God, he is and shall be saved; for the Scripture declareth that the angel which appeared to Cornelius said unto him, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," (Acts xi. 13, 14.) See his sermon in Acts x. 34-43. Towards the conclusion of his sermon to Cornelius and his kinsmen and friends, Peter said, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he, that is,



Christ, which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." And then St Luke recordeth, "That while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," (Acts x. 42-44.) Thus we find that, by believing the gospel which Peter preached, Cornelius and all his household were saved; the Holy Ghost bearing witness unto the truth of the gospel, sealing their hearts and giving them all the eternal merit of Christ—regeneration, pardon, holiness, and heaven. I ask, then, is it not very cruel, very uncharitable, and a very great sin to pervert the gospel of God, the truth of which has been and is now attested and confirmed by the Holy Ghost? for all who truly embrace the gospel are regenerated and made the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, (Gal. iii. 26.) St Paul exhorteth Titus, in reference to those Antichristian teachers who lived in his day, "To rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Surely, in the estimation of all holy, humble, and true Christians, St Paul demonstrated the good feeling and charity of his heart, more by rebuking and admonishing these cruel, corrupt, and Antichristian teachers, —whom the apostle representeth as resisting the truth, and as being men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, (2 Tim. iii. 8,)—than if, from carnal motives, he had connived at them, and surrendered the faith of Christ, and the true and faithful word, to the adversaries of the gospel, of whom the apostle Paul speaking, saith, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works," (2 Cor. xi. 13-15.) For St Paul declareth, that he was set for the defence of the gospel, (Phil. i. 17;) and again, in addressing



all the saints in Christ Jesus which were at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, he saith, "I have you in my heart : inasmuch as in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace," (Phil. i. 7.) For St Paul by his writings both confuted these heretical teachers and established the true doctrine, unto the sanctification, and salvation, and great joy of the Church, and unto the glory and praise of God. It is right, then, to say that St Paul acted more charitably towards these false teachers, by reproving and admonishing them, and shewing to them the way of life and salvation in and through Jesus Christ alone, than they do in the present day, who, under pretence of catholicity, to cover their own negligence, pride, ignorance, slothfulness, carnality, and hardness of heart, do call it charity to connive at and encourage all manner of heresies. But St Paul did not connive at such wickedness. Verily, there is but one way to heaven, which is by regeneration and union with Christ; and there is but one true doctrine, which true doctrine was preached by Christ himself and by his apostles. This is clear according to Scripture, for St Paul saith to Timothy, "Charge some that they teach no other doctrine," (1 Tim. i. 3.) And the true Church—that is, the regenerate—do know what the true doctrine of the gospel really is; for St John saith, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," (1 John ii. 20.) "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life," (1 John v. 20.) But even in the time of St John there were antichristian teachers, who opposed the truth of God; for St John saith, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time," (1 John ii. 18.) And here it is right that we should seriously

meditate upon the declaration of the Holy Ghost through St Paul, in reference to this subject. For St Paul, writing to Timothy, saith, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy," &c. (1 Tim. iv. 1;) and again, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come," (2 Tim. iii. 1.) Also St Peter declareth that "there shall be false teachers, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them," &c., (see 2 Peter ii. 1-3.) Now, we know of a certainty through the Word of truth, that Satan, who is called the prince of this world, and the god of this world, hath always opposed the Church of God. And this he hath done from the beginning, even unto the present time. Milner, in his Ecclesiastical History—a book worthy of being read by all Christians—in relation to the wickedness and cruelty of the popes, states:—"It was reserved to Innocent the Third, than whom no pope ever possessed more ambition, to institute the Inquisition; and the Waldenses, who were Christians, were the first objects of its cruelty. He authorised certain monks to frame the process of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics (but who in reality were Christians) to the secular power. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, thousands of persons were hanged and burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was, that they trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteous idolatry and superstition. Three hundred thousand persons, authorised and commissioned by the pope, and induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses, who were Christians, with carnage and confusion for a number of years. The reader who is not versed in history of this kind, can scarcely conceive the scenes of baseness, cruelty, perfidy, barbarity, indecency, and hypocrisy over

which Pope Innocent—who, both by his nature and conduct, was the very reverse of his name—presided. The castle of Menerbe, on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labour was to no purpose. Earle Simon and the pope's legate then caused a great fire to be kindled, and they burned a hundred and forty persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that He had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon that on the last day, when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives if they would submit to the popedom. But the Christians 'loved not their lives unto the death,' (Rev. xii. 11.) Only three women of the company recanted." In the year 1229, the Romish priests, according to the mind of the pope, made a law to forbid the laity having the Old and the New Testament. Indirectly, the same thing had long been practised. In the popedom is found the blood of saints and of prophets; and through the papal doctrine men are deluded unto their destruction. A monk inquisitor, named Francis Borelli, in the year 1380, armed with a bull of Pope Clement VII., undertook to persecute the real Christians. In the space of thirteen years, he delivered a hundred and fifty persons to be burned at Grenoble. In the valley of Fraissiniere and the neighbourhood he apprehended eighty persons, who also were burned. The monk inquisitors adjudged one moiety of the goods of the persons condemned to themselves, the rest to the temporal lords. What cruelty and wickedness may not be expected when avarice, malice,

and superstition unite in the same cause? About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Christians in the valley of Pragela. The poor people, seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of the winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps; the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children that were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after. In 1460, the Christians of the Fraissiniere were persecuted by a monk of the order of Friar Minors, or Franciscans, armed with the authority of the papal archbishop of Ambrun. In the valley of Loyse, four hundred little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves, and set on fire. On the whole, about three thousand belonging to the valley were destroyed through the cruelty and tyranny of the papal antichrist; and this righteous people were in that place exterminated, (see Milner's Ecclesiastical History, p. 553.) At Montreal, near Carcassone, in the year 1206, in a conference held there, a Christian pastor of the name of Arnold, being requested by the true Christians, the Albigenes, together with several other Christian pastors, undertook to prove in the conference that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous, blasphemous, and unscriptural; that the Church of Rome was not the bride of Christ, and that its polity was bad, and unholy. On the side of the Papacy, a bishop named Eusus, the monk Dominic, and several other priests and monks, and two of the pope's legates, presented themselves at the conference on the day appointed. The bishop had brought with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired to be heard by word of mouth. He dis-

coursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience. At length, Arnold desired that the bishops and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the Word of God. The Bishop of Villeneuve, who belonged to the papal party, declared that nothing could be determined, because of the coming of the Crusaders. What he asserted was too true: the papal armies advanced, and by fire and faggot soon decided all controversies. The fires continued to be kindled till the year 1488, when the method of military violence was adopted by the persecutors. Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, was deputed by Pope Innocent VIII. to assault the sufferers with the sword. In Germany, in the year 1230, the papal inquisition oppressed the Christians with peculiar severity. They were, notwithstanding, steadfast in their profession; and the pastors publicly announced the Pope to be antichrist. About the year 1330, Echard, a Dominican monk, an inquisitor, grievously oppressed them. At length, after many cruelties, he urged the Christians, the Waldenses, to inform him of the real cause of their separation from the Church of Rome—being convinced in his conscience of the justice of several of their charges. This was an opportunity not often vouchsafed to this people by their enemies, of using the weapons of Christian warfare. The event was salutary: Echard was enlightened, confessed the faith of Christ, united himself to his people. Like Paul, he preached the faith which once he destroyed, and in the issue, was burned in Heidelberg, and the Christians glorified God in him. Although the Papists are not allowed to adopt such sanguinary methods in this country now, yet their doctrines are equally corrupt and destructive to those which receive them, and they darken the gospel and hide from men the salvation and glory of Christ:



for St Paul saith that Satan, whom he calleth the god of this world, hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) The Holy Spirit calleth the regenerate and heaven-born ministers of the gospel, the ambassadors of Christ. A godly divine, who lived nearly three hundred years ago, in his commentary on ver. 11 of Rev. ix., calleth the Pope antichrist, the king of hypocrites, and Satan's ambassador. For although he maketh a profession of the gospel, he is a very great adversary to it, and persecuteth the saints of the Most High, and prohibiteth the laity from having the Bible in a language which they can understand. And here it is right to state that those who do truly know the gospel of Christ, cannot but appreciate, esteem, admire, and love it far above all worldly things; neither can they be finally deceived, because God is faithful, and the eternal Spirit the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, beareth witness unto the truth of the doctrines of the gospel, (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Now we are sure of this, that what the Holy Ghost teacheth us, is what is contained in the Scriptures, enabling us to understand and to love the Scriptures: nor doth the Holy Spirit ever teach us anything that is contrary to the Scripture; nor doth He ever teach one Christian anything contrary to what He teacheth another, although the Holy Spirit may indeed teach one Christian more than another: for St Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, saith, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it: neither yet now are ye able," (1 Cor. iii. 2;) and in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of Christ being an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, he saith, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing," (Heb. v. 11.) But God, speaking in the Scripture concerning the regenerate, which is the Church, saith, "I

will give them one heart and one way ; and the work of the Holy Ghost is to bring all true Christians into the unity of the faith." And Christ saith, " But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," (John xiv. 26.) Also Christ saith, " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth ;" and here it is right to state, unto the glory and praise of God, that there would be no true religion or real Christianity in the world, were it not for the effectual operations of the Holy Ghost. This truth ought to be devoutly, seriously, and thankfully considered and acknowledged by every member of the Church, which is the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. For if we at all times rightly considered this, we should be humble and meek, and lowly in heart ; and, at the same time, we should be filled with wonder, thankfulness, praise, and love to God, and live in love and unity with all the members of the Church ; and we should earnestly pray that all men might be saved and brought to the knowledge of the truth. And for the consolation of the Church in all ages, even unto the end of the world, Christ hath declared that the elect, that is, true Christians, cannot be deceived, (Matt. xxiv. 24 ; Mark xiii. 22 ; John vi. 37, and x. 28, 29 ; Rom. viii. 28-30 ; 2 Tim. ii. 19.) And as it is a scriptural truth that the Holy Ghost governeth and sanctifieth the whole Church, which is the body of Christ, all of whom are regenerated, or born of God ; even so it is right to state, that the Church of God consisteth of those, and of those only, in every denomination of Christians, who are regenerated or born of God. My meaning is this : Every soul in the Church of England, who is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and each one among the

Wesleyans, who is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and each one and all those amongst the Primitive Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, &c., who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus, all these are in, and do form the Church of God. In a word, they are the regenerate, and none but the regenerate, which form the mystical body and holy Church of Christ throughout all the world. For a man may be baptized with water, and yet not be regenerated; for John the Baptist saith, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He (that is, Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," (see Matt. iii. 11.) Still, baptism is proper, and a scriptural rite, and a sign of regeneration, and setteth forth the depravity and natural sinfulness of man, and also the willingness of God to wash us, and save us by His grace. But the Scripture maketh a manifest difference between the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Spirit; for although it is very right, and the positive command of Scripture, to baptize with water, yet this is not regeneration; for John the Baptist saith, "He (that is, Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Now this is regeneration, when "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," (Rom. v. 5.) Now a man may be an external member of any of those denominations just referred to, and yet he may not be one with Christ by spiritual regeneration, and by faith unfeigned, and by spiritual union with Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now as it is right, and in accordance with Holy Scripture, to say that Christ reigneth and dwelleth in the hearts of each, and of all the regenerate, by His Holy Spirit, and by faith unfeigned; and as it is right, and in accordance with Scripture, to state that "grace reigneth through righteousness (in the hearts of the faithful) unto eternal life, through

Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. v. 21 ;) even so also it is, in accordance with the Scripture, right and proper to state, that Satan dwelleth and worketh in the hearts of the unregenerate, and of the disobedient, hardening their hearts, and darkening their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. Also, it is manifest, according to ecclesiastical history, that Satan hath fought against the Church for more than eighteen hundred years, and to this day he fighteth against the Church by means of Popery, Pelagianism, and Socinianism, substituting these for the gospel ; and in order the more effectually to blind the understandings of men, and to pervert the gospel of Christ, Satan hath introduced into the world the horrible Papal idolatry, and other antichristian doctrines. But then we must consider this, that those men are inexcusable who receive their corrupt doctrines, for this reason, because God hath given us the Bible, His holy Word, and if men "will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," (Luke xvi. 31.) David saith, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," (Ps. cxix. 105.) And St Paul saith that "the Holy Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Now, whoever carefully readeth and considereth the writings of St Paul, cannot but be impressed with the fervent desire of the apostle to impart unto the Church the saving knowledge of Christ, and unto all men the gospel in its purity, not mixed up with the devices of the heathen, for the Scripture saith, "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought : he maketh the devices of the people of none effect," (Ps. xxxiii. 10.) But, on the other hand, the Scripture declareth, "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations," (ver. 11.) St Paul, being at Miletus, sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the



Church, to whom he explained that he had preached the gospel of God in its purity, even as he had been taught it, not by man, but by Jesus Christ himself, (Gal. i. 12,) "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," (Acts xx. 21.) Also, the apostle said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," (ver. 27.) In many places in Scripture the gospel is called the counsel of God. For the Evangelical Prophet praiseth God for the gospel, saying, "O Lord, thou art my God ; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name : for thou hast done wonderful things: thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth," (Isa. xxv. 1.) And St Paul calleth the gospel "the counsel of God's own will," (Eph. i. 11,) and "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Eph. iii. 11.) Also, he calleth the gospel "the mystery," (ver. 3,) and "the mystery of Christ," (ver. 4.) Also he calleth the gospel "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world," (1 Cor. ii. 7.) Now, although it may appear to some in the present day a thing of small importance, and an excusable sin, when many teach doctrines utterly opposed to the eternal counsel of God, which is the gospel ; yet, in the estimation of St Paul, it was reckoned a very great sin to pervert the gospel of God, (see Gal. i. 7, 8.) Also, St Paul, in order to give weight unto the doctrine which he taught, and unto the gospel which he preached, expressly declareth that he received the gospel from Christ alone, and taught the gospel through Christ. On this point he is particularly plain, for he saith, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," (Gal. i. 11, 12.) Moreover the apostle, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, giveth him a most solemn charge in relation to the teaching of the gospel ; for



he saith, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry," (2 Tim. iv. 1-5.) Let us observe here the momentous and solemn charge given to Timothy—Preach the word: not the devices of men, which the Lord maketh of none effect, (Ps. xxxiii. 10;) but Timothy is to preach the word of truth, (2 Cor. vi. 7,) the glorious gospel of the blessed God, (1 Tim. i. 11,) the faithful saying, which is worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (ver. 15;) and forasmuch as there were many in the days of the apostle Paul who, for the sake of money, taught antichristian doctrines, (Tit. i. 11,) even as the Papists, Pelagians, Socinians, and the mockers of these days, do also now teach antichristian doctrines for filthy lucre's sake, being men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith, (2 Tim. iii. 8,) St Paul exhorteth Titus to rebuke them sharply, that they might be sound in the faith, (Tit. i. 13.) Also he exhorteth Timothy, notwithstanding the opposition of the adversaries, to hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim. i. 13,) and likewise that he should charge some that they should teach no other doctrine, (1 Tim. i. 3.) Also St Paul directeth Timothy to avoid the love of money, so conspicuous in those antichristian teachers, and also to avoid their unscriptural doctrines and their evil examples; for he saith to Timothy, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things;

and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting," (1 Tim. vi. 11-16.) The doctrine that Timothy was commissioned to preach was that only in which he had been instructed by St Paul, which is set forth in his fourteen epistles, and by the four evangelists, and in the holy Scriptures generally. St Paul saith expressly there is one faith, (Eph. iv. 5;) and he declareth that the work of the Holy Ghost, in His manifold operations in the Church, is to bring all the members of the true Churches into the "unity of the faith," (Eph. iv. 13.) It cannot, then, be a matter of small importance as to whether the true faith is preached, or things opposed to the faith are taught. This is clear, according to the testimony of holy Scripture, and the solemn charge given by St Paul to Timothy. In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle saith, "When we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, . . . and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith," (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.) Also in ver. 5 he saith, "When I could no longer forbear I sent to know your faith;" and in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians he saith, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling,

and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Thess. i. 11, 12.) Here we find the apostle ascribing all goodness, and Christian virtues, and all true godliness, to the power of faith through the grace of God,—of faith, I say, "unfeigned," not feigned faith, such as unregenerate men have, and which, after all, resteth on the creature and self, and which St James calleth dead ; but "faith unfeigned," which resteth solely on Christ, and embraceth Christ with all His eternal merits. For which cause also St Peter calleth faith "precious," (2 Pet. i. 1 ;) and for the same reason Christ said to the Church of the Laodiceans, "I counsel thee to buy of me 'gold tried in the fire,' that thou mayest be rich," (Rev. iii. 18.) By gold tried in the fire, we understand our Saviour to mean faith in Him,—unfeigned faith, which disclaimeth self, and resteth on Christ only, who of God is made to every true believer in Christ, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, (1 Cor. i. 30.) Here we must observe that it is to humble souls that faith unfeigned is given ; for God giveth grace unto the humble, but the proud He beholdeth afar off ; and God resisteth the proud, and they also resist Him, and despise His people, as it is written, "Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge," (Ps. xiv. 6.) But still, even in this fearful case in which all the proud are in, there is an exhortation given by St James even unto them : "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you

up," (James iv. 7-10.) Also the prophet Habakkuk contrasteth two sorts of characters: the proud and the meek, or the just; for he saith, "Behold, his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith," (Hab. ii. 4;) for the humble and meek, by faith unfeigned, receive Christ with all his eternal merits, which saveth them, and they live on him and in him, and he is their life; and Christ dwelleth in them, and they dwell in him, (John vi. 56.) For Christ saith, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day," (ver. 54.) Observe here that Christ putteth "eating" for "believing," and "believing" for "eating." For He saith again, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me [that is, that believeth on me] I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day," (John vi. 37, 39, 40.) And again Christ saith, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Also He saith, "I am the bread of life. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever," (ver. 58.) By "eating" here is meant "believing." For St Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, saith, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," (Gal. ii. 16.) For unfeigned faith receiveth Christ Jesus, with His infinite and eternal merit,



which saveth the true Church, which is composed of the regenerate, even of all that believe in Him. How very different the teaching of some in the present day is to that of St Paul, let all humble and faithful Christians, who fear God and believe in Christ, and love the gospel, judge. Wherefore, as in the age of the apostles, there was a need, according to the Scripture, that holy, humble, and faithful souls should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; even so now in these perilous times, (for more than one thousand seven hundred years have elapsed since St John, writing to the Church of God, saith, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time," 1 John ii. 18)—even so now it is right that real Christians should, with meekness of wisdom, out of real regard, unfeigned love to the gospel, and to the souls of men, carefully and diligently instruct, by means of the faithful word, them that oppose themselves, "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," (2 Tim. ii. 25.)

Now, as it is a scriptural truth that no man can understand the gospel without being regenerated by the Holy Ghost, so we believe also that all the regenerate who confess Christ's holy name, do now or will shortly agree in the truth of God's holy Word: for all the regenerate are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, even as it hath been declared. But St Paul declareth in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians that before the second coming of Christ, that the man of sin, whom orthodox divines consider to be the popedom and the papal hierarchy, should oppose the gospel, (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4;) to which man of sin, Daniel also is believed by pious Christians to refer, where he says, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High," (Dan. vii. 25; see also Rev. xiii.



5-8.) Also, Pelagius, Socinus, and Arius opposed the gospel of Christ, the followers of whose pernicious heresies are to be found in the present day. St Paul declareth that the recipients of these pernicious heresies, in preference to the pure doctrine of the gospel, will not be saved; for he saith, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) But in reference to the Thessalonian Church, (which is applicable also to the universal Church of the regenerate,) he saith, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.) It is to be observed here that true Christians receive the gospel in love to Christ and to the gospel; and they love and esteem Christ and the gospel of God above all things; neither do they teach for the sake of money, although it is quite right that faithful preachers should receive a decent and comfortable stipend according to Scripture; yet their heart is not set upon money, but upon the gospel of God, upon Christ, and upon doing the will of God. But the reverse is the case with what may be designated pseudo-Christians. For, in the first place, they are proud, and harden their hearts, and resist the truth, and will not endure sound doctrine, (2 Tim. iv. ;) they turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables, and they receive the devices and traditions of men: and they receive the damnable heresies (2 Pet. ii. 1) of Popery, Pelagianism, and Socinianism; and the teachers of these false doctrines do, through covetousness, with feigned words, make merchandise of the

people, (2 Pet. ii. 3;) and many shall follow their pernicious doctrines and ways, (ver. 2.) And this is the case in the present day. But although men may think themselves at liberty to teach things which are contrary to Scripture for filthy lucre's sake, without incurring guilt and the divine displeasure, yet the holy Scripture teacheth us far otherwise; for St Peter, writing in reference to these false teachers, saith, "That their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not," (2 Pet. ii. 3.) And whereas, there are those in the present day who say that the recipients of these false doctrines may be saved by them; yet it is evident that the holy Scriptures do teach us far otherwise; for St Paul saith, "That inasmuch as these persons do prefer and choose the vain delusions and traditions of men in preference to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that for this very cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) And St Paul declareth that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, (2 Thess. i. 7-9.) Observe, here, that the teachers of these false doctrines referred to by St Paul as men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, are far more guilty than pagans, for this very reason: because they not only resist the truth, but also endeavour to pervert the gospel of Christ, which is the highest possible offence and insult that can be offered to the infinite majesty and glory of God; by denying and contradicting those things which the Holy Ghost hath so clearly revealed in Scripture. And forasmuch as these teachers of false doctrines are not only willingly

ignorant of God themselves, but do also by their lies, and by their lightness and irreverence, and by their vain, and empty, and sacrilegious jangling, keep those who are led by them in ignorance of God, and in midnight darkness, St Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, twice declareth them accursed; for he saith, "But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," (Gal. i. 7-9.) I state these things, and bring forward these Scriptures, which are so many witnesses to prove how utterly opposed to the sentiments and doctrines inculcated by St Paul are the antichristian doctrines of the Papists, Pelagians, and Socinians, who, in these days, do impiously and cruelly pervert the gospel of Christ. In conclusion, let us all obey the command of Jesus Christ himself, who said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," (John v. 39; Isa. viii. 20, and xxxiv. 16; Luke xvi. 29; Acts xvii. 11; John v. 46.) Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that He has been pleased to bestow on us the infinitely precious jewel of His own most holy Word, to be our light, and His own most holy and eternal Spirit to illuminate, to soften, to comfort, and to sanctify our hearts, and to lead us to Jesus Christ, who is our life and our righteousness, and who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, (Tim. iv. 10.) May God of His infinite mercy bring into the way of truth those who are propagating errors. And may it please God of His infinite goodness to have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and upon all the unregenerate, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of His Word, and bring them home to

His flock ; and may they be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. . . . And may it please God to make what has been written in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, subservient to His own will ; and make it a blessing and a word in season to the weary and heavy-laden, the meek, the humble, the tempted, the tried, the dejected, and the forlorn ; and also to all those who love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity, I pray that it might be acceptable. And now, dear reader, I commend thee to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build thee up, and to give thee an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, (Acts xx. 32.)

Now, to Him that is of power to stablish us, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the preaching of Jesus Christ : according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest ; and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith : to God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen, (Rom. xvi. 27.)





PART II.

THE SWISS CONFESSION AND  
EXPOSITION OF THE FAITH.



## PREFACE.

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To all the faithful servants of Christ throughout Germany, and also throughout other foreign nations, the ministers of the united churches of Switzerland pray that grace and peace may be imparted by God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

. . . . .  
1. Hitherto many and various confessions and expositions of the faith have been written, and proclaimed amongst the public, particularly at this time, throughout kingdoms, nations, and states, in which confessions and expositions in this last age, on account of the unhappy increase of pernicious heresies which have sprung up everywhere, they teach and testify that they in their churches do recognise, perceive, believe, and teach that which is orthodox, scriptural, true, and pure in every respect concerning all and each of the doctrines of the Christian faith, and of our religion; and finally, that they have separated from the communion of antiscriptural teachers. We therefore, (although we have set forth these things before in our writings, which have been printed and proclaimed amongst the public, yet because these may perhaps have been forgotten, and because, in various places, they explain these things also too prolixly, so as to render them less edifying to those who investigate and

read these things,) being instigated by the bright example of other faithful men, do endeavour to comprise and embrace in this brief exposition, and to set forth and to propose to all the faithful servants of Christ, the doctrine and discipline of our churches, which now for many years, and through various conflicting circumstances, from the beginning of the Reformation even until this day, they have taught with the greatest unanimity, and do also now guard with one consent. In this same confession we testify to all, our unanimity and agreement which the Lord hath given to us, as, in our churches, in which the Lord hath willed that we should minister, we all speak the same thing : nor are there amongst us any divisions, but we are one entire body, of the same mind, and of the same judgment. We testify, also, that we by no means propagate such doctrines in our churches as some of our adversaries, chiefly amongst those unto whom our writings do not reach, and who are ignorant of our doctrine, do endeavour falsely and undeservedly to attribute to, and to obtrude upon us.

2. Wherefore, impartial readers will most clearly see by these our writings that we have no fellowship with antiscip-  
tural teachers and their heresies, of which, in this exposition, we have made mention of each in relation to the points explained here ; and whilst glancing at them, have rejected them. So that careful readers will discover that we have not separated and broken off by wicked schism from the holy Churches of Christ in Germany, France, England, and other nations in the Christian world ; inasmuch as we truly agree with them all and each, in this confessed Christian verity, and do embrace these Churches with sincere love.

3. But although in different Churches some degree of variety is perceptible as it respects rites and ceremonies, yet

as the same were established with due consideration for the benefit and edification of the Churches, that variety has never been seen to furnish cause for dissensions and schisms in the Churches at any time. For in this thing, the Churches of Christ have always used this liberty. Because this was esteemed lawful according to ecclesiastical history. To pious antiquity, mutual agreement in the principal doctrines of the faith, and in the orthodox explanation, and in brotherly love, was reckoned quite sufficient.

4. Wherefore, we hope that the Churches of Christ, when they have seen and clearly comprehended that we agree with them in all things, in the doctrine of the holy and eternal God, also in the orthodox explanation, and in brotherly love, but especially with the ancient apostolical Church, that they also will readily and joyfully agree with us also in the unity of the faith and doctrine, and in the orthodox explanation, and in fraternal love. Seeing also we have published this confession at this time especially, to this end, that we might seek the peace and concord of the Churches of Germany with mutual love, and that we may all agree and unite together in the true faith, and that other foreign Churches may be of the same mind and judgment with us, and retain amity. Wherefore, we are verily persuaded that those very Churches themselves are endued with that love, sincerity, and integrity towards us; that if, peradventure, any point in relation to our affairs may not hitherto have been rightly understood, at least by some, this our sincere confession being read and heard, they will in no wise enumerate us amongst heretics, nor condemn as impious, our Churches, which are the true Churches of Christ.

5. But we declare before all, that we are always most readily and most willingly prepared, if any one should re-



quire it, to explain more copiously all and each of the things set forth here by us: finally, to those who can teach better things out of the Word of God, thankfully both to yield and to follow in the Lord, to whom be praise and glory.

. . . . .

*March 1, in the year 1566.*

All the ministers of the Churches of Christ in Switzerland, those which are at Zurich, the ministers of Berna, the Schaffusians, the Sangalli, the High Court of Parliament of Germany, and amongst our allies on this side of, and beyond the Alps, the Mylhusians, and the inhabitants of Bienna, have subscribed unto this confession, to whom the ministers of the Church which is at Geneva have united themselves.

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# THE CONFESSION AND PURE EXPOSITION

OF THE

## ORTHODOX FAITH,

AND OF ALL THE DOCTRINES OF THE SINCERE AND

VERITABLE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

Cordially and unanimously agreed upon by the ministers of the Church of Christ, which are in Switzerland, Zurich, Berna, Schaphusium, Sangallum, and by the High Court of Parliament of Germany, &c., and amongst our allies, also, the Mylhusians, and the inhabitants of Bienna, to whom also the ministers of the Church of Geneva have united themselves, set forth in this book, that they might testify to all the faithful, that they persevere and continue firm in the unity of the true and ancien Church of Christ; neither do they spread any new or erroneous doctrines, and that, on this account, they have no fellowship with anti-scriptural teachers, or heresies: published at this time, in order that all the pious faithful might form a judgment thereof.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—ROM. x. 10.

*I. Concerning the Holy Scriptures, the true Word of God.*

1. We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of each Testament, to be the veritable and true Word of God: and that they possess sufficient authority in and of themselves, and not from men. For God himself spoke to the fathers, prophets, and apostles; and He still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures. And in this Holy Scripture, the universal Church of Christ hath the most complete explanation of all things whatsoever, which pertain unto saving faith, and is rightly instructed, with respect to a life well pleasing to God. For which cause, it is expressly commanded by God, that nothing should be added to, or taken from it. / Therefore, we know that all true wisdom and piety is to be sought for out of these very Scriptures; also, the reformation and government of the churches, and the institution of all offices of piety, likewise the probation of doctrines, and the rejection and confutation of all errors, and also all admonitions, according to that saying of the apostle—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof," &c., (2 Tim. iii.) And again—"These things write I unto thee," saith the apostle to Timothy, in chap. iii., epist. 1, "That thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God," &c. And the apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, saith—"When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God," &c., (1 Thes. ii.) For the Lord himself hath said in the gospel, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of my Father which speaketh in you; therefore he that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me," (Matt. x.; Luke x.; John xiii.)

2. Wherefore, when this Word of God is proclaimed in the Church, in this our day, by preachers lawfully called, we be-

lieve that the real Word of God is then declared, and that it should be received by the faithful; nor ought any other Word of God either to be devised, or feigned, or expected from Heaven. And in the present day, that very Word of God is to be regarded which is proclaimed, not the announcing minister, who, although he may be unworthy and a sinner, yet, nevertheless, the Word of God remaineth veritable and good. 'Nor do we judge that external preaching to be as it were unprofitable, for this reason: because the building up of the true religion dependeth upon the internal illumination of the Spirit; because it is written, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour. For all shall know me." And, "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase," (Jer. xxxi. ; 1 Cor. iii. ; John vi.) For although no man can come unto Christ unless he is drawn by the heavenly Father, and internally illuminated through the Holy Ghost, yet we know, that God willeth that the Word of God should also be preached publicly. Indeed, God could have instructed Cornelius, spoken of in the Acts, through His Holy Spirit, or by the ministry of an angel, without the ministry of St Peter, of whom the angel speaking, says—"He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." / For He who illuminates internally, His Holy Spirit being given to men, even He, when He was giving commandment, said unto His disciples—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." For this cause, Paul preached the Word externally to Lydia, a seller of purple at Philippi, but the Lord internally opened the heart of this woman; and the same Paul, employing an appropriate and expert gradation, (Rom. x.,) at last concludes thus—"Therefore faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." In the meantime, we acknowledge that God can illuminate men, whom and when He willeth, even without the external ministry; because that also is in His

power. But we are speaking concerning the usual means of instructing men, both by the commandment and the example delivered to us by God.

3. Therefore, we reject all the heresies of Artemon, of the Manichæans, of the Valentinians, of Cerdo, and of the Marcionites, who denied that the Scriptures proceeded from the Holy Ghost, or who did not receive some of them, or who inserted something in them, and corrupted them. In the meantime, we readily admit that certain books in the Old Testament, which were called by the ancients apocryphal books, by others, ecclesiastical books, although indeed they were allowed to be read in the churches, yet, nevertheless, they were never brought forward as an authority of themselves, to establish us in the faith. As also Augustine relates in book xviii., concerning the city of God, chapter 38, and brings forward the names of certain prophets and books mentioned in the Books of the Kings; but he adds that these are not in the canon, and that those which we have are quite sufficient to promote piety.

## II. *Of Interpreting the Holy Scriptures, and of the Fathers, Councils, and Traditions.*

1. The apostle Peter hath said that the Holy Scriptures are not of any private interpretation. Therefore, we do not approve of some interpretations: whereupon, neither do we acknowledge that to be the true and genuine interpretation and explanation of the Scriptures, which some call the sense of the Roman Church—that is to say, that which the defenders of the Roman Church contend ought to be received by, and forced upon, all against their will; but we acknowledge that interpretation and explanation of the Scriptures to be the orthodox and genuine which is sought for and obtained out of the Scriptures themselves, according to the genius and meaning of each language in which they were



written ; also weighing and considering diligently, and explaining all the circumstances ; also explaining more carefully and more lucidly all those passages, either similar or dissimilar, so that it agreeth with the rule of faith and love, and truly and eminently tendeth to the glory of God, and to the salvation of men.

2. Therefore, we do not despise the interpretations and explanations of the holy Greek and Latin fathers, nor do we disapprove of their arguments and handlings of the same sacred things agreeing with the Scriptures, from whom, nevertheless, we humbly recede when they are discovered to bring forward, or to allege anything unbecoming or unwholesome, or contrary to the Scriptures. Nor do we think, that by this thing, that any injury is inflicted on them, seeing that all of them, with one mouth, were not willing that their writings should be esteemed, or reckoned equal to the canonical books ; but they order us to prove them, and so far as they agree with them, to receive them ; but if they differ, they order us to recede. / In the same way the definitions and decrees, or rules of councils, are placed.

3. Wherefore, in controversies and causes of faith, we do not suffer ourselves to be constrained by the naked opinions of the fathers, or by the determination of councils, much less by custom received, or even by a multitude of the same opinion, or by the prescription of length of time. Therefore, in the cause of faith we do not admit any other judge but God himself speaking by the holy Scriptures, what is true, and what is false : what is to be followed, or what is to be avoided. Thus we do not acquiesce in the judgments even of spiritual men, unless they are in unison with, and can be proved by, the Word of God. Verily, Jeremiah, and other prophets, heavily condemned the councils of the priests, who instituted things contrary to the law of God, and they have diligently admonished us, that we should not hear those

fathers, or stand in the way of them who, walking according to their own devices, have turned away from the law of God.

4. Equally do we reject human traditions, which, although they may be dignified with specious titles, as divine, and apostolical, the living voice of the apostles, bishops succeeding to the Churches committed to them; nevertheless, when their traditions are compared with the Scriptures, they differ widely from these, and their own differences shew that they are in no wise apostolical. For like as the apostles did not teach contrary things amongst themselves, so also the apostolical teachers have not taught contrary to the apostles. Yea, it is blasphemous to say that the apostles, with their living voice, taught contrary to their writings. For Paul expressly says that he himself taught the same things in all the Churches; and again, he says, "For we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge." In another place, again, he testifieth that he and his disciples—that is, apostolical men—walked in the same way, and performed all things in the same manner, by the same Spirit. Formerly, the Jews also held the traditions of the elders, but they were confuted, and severely rebuked by our Lord, shewing that the observation of them is opposed to the law of God, and that by these things, God is worshipped in vain.

### III. *Concerning God, His Unity and Trinity.*

1. We believe and teach that God is one in essence or nature, subsisting through Himself, able of Himself to perform all things, invisible, incorporeal, infinite, eternal—the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible—the Supreme Good, ever living, quickening, vivifying, and preserving all things—omnipotent, and infinitely wise—beneficent, gracious, and merciful—just and true. But we reject the plural-

ity of gods, because it is expressly written, "The Lord thy God is one Lord. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before my face. I am the Lord, and there is none else; besides me, there is no God. Am not I the Lord? and there is none other besides me. A just God, and a Saviour; there is none other but me. I am the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth," &c., (Exod. xxxiv.)

2. Nevertheless, we believe and teach that the same infinite, one, and undivided God, is inseparably and inconfusedly distinguished by the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So that the Father begat the Son from eternity; the Son was begotten by an ineffable generation; but the Holy Ghost proceedeth from both, and that from eternity, to be adored with both: so that verily, there are not three gods, but three persons—consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal,—distinct, as it regards their substance, or subsistence; and in order, one preceding the other, nevertheless, by no inequality. For, with regard to nature or essence, they are so united that they are one God, and the divine essence is the same in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For the Scripture hath delivered to us a manifest distinction of the persons: the angel saying, amongst other things, to the Holy Virgin, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And also, in the baptism of Christ, a voice delivered from heaven is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son." The Holy Ghost also appeared like a dove. And when the Lord himself was giving commandment to baptize, He ordered His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, (John i.; Matt. xxviii.) Also, in another place in the gospel, Christ said, "The Father shall send the Holy Ghost in my name."

Also, again, Christ saith, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me," (John xiv. and xv.) Finally, we receive the creed of the apostles, which delivers to us the true faith.

3. Therefore, we reject the errors of the Jews, and of the Mohammedans, and of all those which blaspheme this blessed, holy, and adorable Trinity. Also, we reject all heresies and heretics teaching that the Son and the Holy Ghost is God by name only; also, that they are created, or that the one is subject to the other in the Trinity. Finally, that there is an inequality in it, more or less diverse in their natures, or will, or as if the Son and the Holy Ghost are only, as it were, the affections and attributes of the one Father God: as the Monarchists, the Novatians, Praxeas, the Patripassianians, Sabellius, Samosatenus, Ætius, Macedonius, the Anthromorphites, Arius, and such like imagined.

#### IV. *Of Idols or Images of God, Christ, and Saints.*

1. But because God is a Spirit, and His infinite essence is invisible, verily He cannot be represented by any art, or image; hence we do not reverence or worship any mere likenesses of God, seeing that the Scripture calls them lying vanities. Therefore, we reject not only the idols of the Gentiles, but also the images of Christians. For although Christ took upon Him our human nature, nevertheless, He did not assume it on this account, that a likeness of Him should be represented by statuaries and painters. For He himself denied that He came to destroy the law and the prophets, (Matt. v.) But images are forbidden, both by the law and by the prophets, (Deut. iv.; Isa. xi.) He denied His future corporeal presence to the Church; He promised that He would be with us by His Spirit for ever, (John xvi.; 2 Cor. v.) Who, therefore, can believe that the shadow, or the like-

ness of a body can confer any benefit on the pious? And seeing that Christ dwelleth in us by His Spirit, we are therefore the temples of God, (1 Cor. iii.; 2 Cor. vi.) But what agreement can the temple of God have with idols? And seeing that the blessed spirits, and the celestial saints, whilst they lived here on earth, refused all worship offered to them, and opposed images, (Acts iii., xiv.; Rev. xiv. 22,) does it seem probable to any one that their images, to which men bend their knees, uncover their heads, and wait upon with other honours, should be pleasing to celestial saints and angels?

2. But in order that men might be built up in the true religion, and instructed in the things of God, and in His salvation, the Lord commanded His servants to preach the gospel, (Mark xvi. :) not to paint and to instruct people with a picture. Christ instituted sacraments also; but nowhere did He appoint images. But everywhere, and wheresoever we turn our eyes, things living and real, created by God, appear before our eyes, which, if they are observed, as they ought to be, will much more evidently strike with admiration, and influence the beholder, than all the images of all men, or the vain, motionless, rotten, and dead pictures, concerning which, the prophet hath said, (Ps. cxv.,) "Eyes have they, and they see not," &c. Therefore, we approve of the judgment of Lactantius, an ancient writer, saying, "There is no doubt but that there is no religion wheresoever there is an image." Also, we affirm that the blessed bishop Epiphanius acted rightly, who, finding within the doors of the church a curtain with a picture or representation as if of Christ, or of some saint, he cut it and took it away, because, contrary to the authority of the Scriptures, he saw in the church of Christ the picture of a man suspended; and on that account he gave commandment that, for the time to



come, there should be no curtains of that sort suspended in the church of Christ; forasmuch as they are contrary to our religion, and that that superstition should be abolished, because it is injurious and unseemly to all the faithful people in the Church of Christ. Moreover, we approve of that saying of St Augustine concerning the true religion: "Our religion is not the worship of human works, for the artificers themselves are better, or have more understanding, whom, nevertheless, we ought not to worship," (chap. lv.)

*V. Of the Adoration, the Worship, and the Invocation of God, through the only Mediator, Jesus Christ.*

1. We teach that we are to adore and worship the true God only. This honour we give to no man, according to the commandment of the Lord, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve or worship," (Matt. iv.) Certainly, all the prophets most severely reprov'd the people of Israel, whensoever they adored and worshipp'd other gods, but not the one only true God. And we teach that God is to be adored and worshipp'd, as He himself hath taught us—that is, in spirit and in truth, (John iv.,) not with any superstition, but in sincerity, according to His Word, lest at any time He should say to us also, "Who hath required these things from your hands?" (Isa. lxvi.; Jer. vii.) For Paul also saith, "God is not worshipp'd with human hands, as though he needed anything," &c., (Acts xvii.) We pray to Him alone in all the dangerous vicissitudes and perils of human life, and through the mediation and intercession of our only Mediator and Intercessor, Jesus Christ; for it is expressly commanded us, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," (Ps. l.) But also it is most graciously promised to us by our Lord himself, saying, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father, he will give it to you," (John xvi.) Likewise,

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matt. xi. ;) and seeing it is written, "How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. x.) We truly believe in God alone; we pray to Him only, and verily through Christ. For the apostle saith, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," (1 Tim. ii.) Also, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," (1 John ii.)

2. Therefore, we do not adore, nor worship, nor pray to the holy inhabitants of heaven, nor do we acknowledge them for intercessors, or mediators, before God the Father in the heavens. For God, and Christ the Mediator, is sufficient for us; nor do we give the honour due to God and His Son to others, because it is expressly said, "My glory will I not give to another," (Isa. xlii.) And because Peter hath said, in Acts iv., "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Christ, in whom whosoever do truly rest by faith, they do not seek anything but Christ."

3. In the meantime, we neither despise the saints, nor think meanly concerning them, nor do we esteem them lightly. For we acknowledge that they are the living members of Christ, the friends of God, who have gloriously conquered the flesh and the world. Therefore we love them as brethren, and honour them also, not however with any worship, but with an honourable esteem of them. Likewise we imitate them. For the followers of their faith and of their virtues, are also heirs together with them of eternal salvation, dwell together with them for ever with the eternal God, and with them rejoice in Christ; and we also with most fervent longings wait for the promises. And in this place we approve of the judgment of St Augustine concerning the true

religion, saying, "Our religion is not the worshipping of dead men, because if they lived piously they would not have allowed or sought such honours, but would have wished Him alone to be worshipped by us, by whose illumination they rejoice that we are made the partakers of His merit, that is, of the merit of Christ." Therefore they are to be "honoured, inasmuch as we are to follow them, but they are not to be adored on account of their religion," &c.

4. Much less do we believe that the relics of saints are to be adored or worshipped. For those ancient saints reckoned that they sufficiently honoured their dead saints if they decently committed their relics to the earth, after the spirit had taken its flight beyond the stars: and they esteemed their virtues, their doctrine, and their faith, as the noblest relics of all, which as they appreciated with just commendation of the dead, so they endeavoured to follow the same whilst they lived on the earth. For these ancient saints themselves would not swear, but only by the name of Jehovah God alone, even as it is commanded by the Divine law, (Deut. x.; Exod. xxiii.) For as it is forbidden to us to swear by the names of other gods, so we do not reckon that oaths by saints are requisite. Therefore in all these things we reject that doctrine which ascribeth too much to celestial saints.

## VI. *Of the Providence of God.*

1. We believe that all things in heaven and in earth, and that all creatures, are preserved and governed by the providence of this infinitely wise, eternal, and omnipotent God. For David testifieth and saith, in Ps. cxlii., "The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory is above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" Also again, in Ps. cxxxix., he saith, "Thou art acquainted with all my ways. For there is

not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether," &c. Paul also testifieth, and saith, (Acts xvii.) "In him we live, and move, and have our being." And, "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things," (Rom. xi.) Therefore Augustine, also, in the 8th chapter of his book, concerning the agony of Christ, hath most truly spoken according to the Scripture: "The Lord said, Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without the will of your heavenly Father. But Christ by speaking thus, wished to shew, that, even those creatures which men think to be despicable, mean, and of no account, are yet governed by the omnipotence of the Lord. Thus also verity declares, that the fowls of the air are fed by Him, and that the lilies of the field are clothed by Him, who saith also, that our very hairs are all numbered," (Matt. vi.)

2. Therefore we reject the epicureans who deny the providence of God, and all those who blasphemously say, that God is so employed about the courses of heaven, that He neither sees nor regards us and our works. David also, the royal prophet, hath condemned these, when he said, in Ps. xciv., "How long, Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph? They say, The Lord seeth not, neither doth the God of Jacob know. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" In the meantime, truly the Divine providence worketh through means which we do not despise or neglect as useless, but, on the other hand, we teach, that we are diligently to apply ourselves to these means, even as they are commended to us in the Word of God. Hence, we reject the rash words of those who say, "If all things are managed and conducted by the providence of God, all our endeavours and studies are needless and unprofitable: it will be sufficient if we leave all things to the Divine Provi-

dence to be governed, nor need we be anxious or solicitous about anything, or do anything." For although Paul knew, that in the providence of God he should sail—for God had said to him, (Acts xxiii.,) "Thou must bear witness also at Rome;" and He had also promised and said, (Acts xxvii.,) "There shall be no loss of any man's life among you, neither shall a hair fall from your head"—nevertheless, when the sailors were meditating their flight, the same Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Except these men abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." For God who has predestinated His own end to everything, has ordained also the way and means all along through which it is attained, even unto the end. The heathens attributed these things to blind fortune, and uncertain chance. St James willeth not that we should say, "To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and buy and sell:" but he adds, "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, and we shall live, we will do this, or that." Augustine also saith, "All things which to vain men appear to be done rashly, and without cause in the nature of things, do not come to pass but by His word: because they could not be done, but by His order." This is declared in Ps. cxlviii. Thus it appeared that it was only by chance that Saul, when he was seeking his father's asses, lighted on the prophet Samuel; but the Lord had before said unto the prophet—"To-morrow, I will send to thee a man of the tribe of Benjamin," &c., (1 Sam. ix.)

VII. *Concerning the Creation of all things, of Angels, the Devil, and Man.*

1. This good and omnipotent God created all things, both visible and invisible, by His co-eternal word, and He also preserves the same by His own co-eternal Spirit; David testifying and saying, in Ps. xxxiii., "By the word of the Lord



were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." But all things which God created were really good, as the Scripture saith, and made for the service and use of man. Verily we say that all things proceeded from one principle. Therefore we reject the errors of the Manichæans and of the Marcionites, who impiously pretended that there were always two substances and natures of good and evil, also two beginnings or principles, and so two gods, adverse to each other, good and evil.

2. Amongst all creatures, angels and men stand foremost, or have the pre-eminence in the creation. Concerning the angels, the divine Scripture saith—"Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," (Ps. civ.) Also, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i.) But the Lord Jesus himself testifieth concerning the Devil. "He," saith Christ, in John viii., "was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." We teach, therefore, that some angels indeed persevered in obedience, and are ordained to the faithful service of God and men: but that other angels, of their own accord, fell into sin, and precipitated themselves into destruction, and that they are now become the enemies of all that is good, and of the faithful, &c.

3. But now, concerning man, the Scripture saith, that in the beginning he was made good, according to the image and similitude of God; that God placed him in paradise, and put all things in subjection to him, (Gen. ii.) This is that which David magnificently celebrateth in Psalm viii. Moreover, he added to him his wife, and blessed them. And we say, that man consisteth of two, and diverse substances, in one person:

of the immortal soul, which, when separated from the body, neither sleeps nor dies, neither does it become extinct, and of the mortal body, which, nevertheless, in the last judgment shall be raised from the dead, that afterwards the whole man might continue and remain for ever, either in life or in death. We reject all those who deride, or by subtle disputations call into doubt, the immortality of the soul, or say that the soul sleeps, or that it is a part of God. Finally, we reject all the opinions of all, concerning the creation, concerning angels, and devils, and man, which differ from those things which are delivered to us through the Holy Scriptures, in the Apostolical Church of Christ.

VIII. *Of the Fall of Man, and of Sin, and of the Cause of Sin.*

1. Man, in the beginning, was created by God according to the image of God, in righteousness, and in the holiness of truth, good and upright ; but by the instigation of the serpent, and by his own fault, revolting from goodness and uprightness, he became subject to sin, death, and various other calamities. And such as he was rendered by his fall, such also are all those who have proceeded from him, subject, we say, to sin, death, and various calamities. And we know that sin is that native depravity of man, derived from these our first parents, and propagated into us all, whereby, being immersed in depraved lusts, and averse to goodness, but prone to all evil, full of all iniquity, unbelief, contempt, and hatred of God, we can do no good thing of ourselves, nor indeed can we think anything that is good. Moreover, as years roll on, we bring forth depraved thoughts, words, and actions, corrupt fruits, as might be expected from a corrupt tree ; for which cause, according to our desert, we are all by nature under the wrath of God, and subject to just punishments ; and on this account, we should all have been cast

off, and banished from God for ever, unless Christ our deliverer had redeemed us.

2. By death therefore we understand, not only the death of the body, which, on account of sins, must be once undergone by us all, but also the eternal punishments due to our sins and our depravity. For the apostle, in Eph. ii., saith—“We were dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” Also, Rom. v., “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

3. We acknowledge therefore that there is in all men original sin; we acknowledge that all other sins, by whatsoever name they may be called, whether mortal or venial sins, or that sin also which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is never forgiven, do all spring from this same source, (Mark iii.; John v.) We confess also that sins are not equal, although they spring from the same source of depravity and unbelief; but some sins are heavier than others. For so the Lord hath said in Matt. x. xi., “That it shall be more tolerable for Sodom, than for the city that rejecteth the word of the gospel.” Therefore, we reject the errors of all those who have taught contrary to these words of our Lord; but especially Pelagius, and all Pelagians, together with the Jovianists, declaring with the Stoics that all sins are equal. In this cause, we agree in all things with St Augustine, who brought forth, and defended, all his assertions out of the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, we reject Florinus and Blastus, against whom also Irenæus wrote; and we reject all those who make God the author of sin, seeing it is expressly written in Ps. v.—“Thou art not a God which hast pleasure in wickedness; thou hatest all them which work iniquity, thou

wilt destroy all them which speak lies." And again, in John viii., "When the devil speaketh lies, he speaketh of his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it." But also there is in us, ourselves, enough of sin and depravity, so that there is no need that God should infuse into us an increase of depravity. Furthermore, whensoever God is said in the Scriptures to harden, to blind, and to give men over to a reprobate mind, it is to be understood that God does this in His righteous judgment, as a just judge and an avenger. Finally, how often soever, God is said and appears in the Scripture to do any evil, it is not on this account that man does do evil; but because God, in His righteous judgment, permits that to be done, and does not hinder it, which He could have hindered if He had willed; or because He overrules the wickedness of men for good, as in the sins of the brethren of Joseph; or because He himself so restraineth the sins of men by His righteous power, that men cannot break forth, and range wider than He allows. St Augustine, in his Manual, says—"I sometimes wonder at that ineffable mystery, that anything should be done besides His will, because that also is done which is contrary to His will. Because it could not be done, if God did not permit it to be done. Nor does He indeed permit it unwilling, but willing. Nor would He indeed permit a good man to do evil, unless also His omnipotent power was able to bring good out of that evil." He says these words in reference to other questions, Whether God willed the fall of Adam, or moved or incited him to fall? or why He did not hinder him from falling? But we leave such questions to the curious, knowing that God had prohibited that man should eat of the forbidden fruit, and that He would punish the transgression; but yet these evils did not come to pass, because of the providence of God, or because of the will and power of God, but because of Satan and of our will opposing the will of God.

IX. *Of Free Will, and so of the Powers of Man.*

1. In this cause which has always brought forth many disputations in the Church, we teach that the threefold condition or state of man is to be considered. In the first place, what man was before the fall—namely, upright and free, so that he could have continued in his uprightness, and could have declined to evil: but he fell into sin, and subjected himself and all the race of mortal men to sin and death, as it has been said before.

2. Then it is to be considered what man was after the fall. Truly the understanding of man was not taken away entirely, nor was his will snatched forcibly from him, nor was he altogether changed, as it were, into a stone, or a “trunk” of a tree: nevertheless, these things are so changed and so diminished in man, that men are no more able to do that which they could have done before the fall. For the understanding is darkened: and his will, which was free, is become enslaved and depraved. For he is the servant of sin, not unwilling, but willing. Because his will is not said to be no will. Therefore, though man commits evil or sin, he is not compelled either by God or by the devil, but of his own accord he commits sin, and herein is his most free will. But because we do not often see that the worst crimes and designs of men are hindered by God, for He does not take away from man the liberty of sinning; but lest they should obtain their end, God, by His power, hinders that which otherwise man freely intended. Like as the brothers of Joseph had freely determined to destroy Joseph; but they could not, because in the counsel of God a different thing was appointed.

3. But as far as the understanding of fallen man is concerned as it respects goodness and virtues, he does not of



himself judge rightly concerning Divine things. For the evangelical and apostolical Scripture requireth the regeneration of each one of us; whereby we are made willing to be saved in God's own way. Hence our first nativity, or our natural birth from Adam, brings nothing to us which contributeth to our salvation. Paul says, (1 Cor. ii.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," &c. The same apostle in another place denieth that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any good thing, (2 Cor. iii.) But he shews that the mind or understanding is the leader of the will, but seeing also that the leader is blind, he clearly manifests how far the will extends. Therefore in man, so long as he is not regenerated, there is no free will unto goodness, no strength to perform that which is good. The Lord in the Gospel says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," (John viii.) And the apostle Paul (Rom. viii.) saith, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." But the understanding in fallen man, with regard to earthly things, is not ruined. For God in His mercy has left to him ingenuity and a natural understanding, nevertheless, far different from that which he possessed before the fall. God orders men to exercise their understanding, and at the same time adds His gifts and benefits. And it is clear that we cannot profit even in all the arts, without the blessing of God. Verily the Scripture ascribeth all useful arts to God. For even the heathens referred the origin of these arts to their imaginary deities as the inventors.

4. Finally, it is to be considered and seen whether the wills of the regenerate are free, and how far. In regeneration the understanding is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that it might understand the mysteries and the will of God; and the will itself is not only changed by the Spirit, but also it is furnished with powers that it might will, and do good

of its own accord. Unless we admit this, we deny Christian liberty, and introduce legal servitude. But also the prophet proclaimeth and setteth forth God speaking thus: "I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them in their hearts." The Lord also saith in the Gospel: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Paul also says to the Philippians, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." And again, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Also, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

5. But in the meantime we teach that two things are to be observed. First, that the regenerate in the choosing, and in the working of that which is good, do not merely act passively, but actively. For they are acted upon by God, that they themselves might perform that which they do. For Augustine rightly proveth this—because God is called our helper. But unless he who is helped does something, he cannot be helped. The Manichæans deprived man of all action, and rendered him, as it were, a stone, or the trunk of a tree. Secondly, it is to be observed that infirmity remaineth in the regenerate. For seeing that sin dwelleth in us, and that the flesh warreth against the spirit, even unto the end of our life, the regenerate cannot altogether perform that so readily, which they had determined and intended to do. These things are confirmed by the apostle in Rom. vii. and in Gal. v. Therefore this our free will is weak on account of the remains of the old Adam, and on account of the natural human depravity remaining in us even unto the end of our life. In the meantime, seeing that the powers of the flesh and the remains of the old man are not so strong as that they should be able entirely to destroy the work of the Spirit, the faithful are called free, yet so, that they should acknowledge their infirmity, and never boast of their free will. For

that always ought to appear to the minds of the faithful, which the blessed Augustine so often inculcateth out of the writings of the apostle Paul: "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" He does not yield to those who say, that whatsoever we determine to do or intend to do, shall come to pass. For the events of things are placed in the hands of God. Hence Paul prays to the Lord that he might have a prosperous journey; and for this reason, because the free will of man is weak and infirm.

6. Furthermore, no man denies but that in external or worldly things, that both the regenerate and the unregenerate have a free will. For man has this common constitution together with other living creatures, (to which he is not inferior,) that he willeth some things, and other things he willeth not. For instance, he may either speak or keep silence—he may leave his house, or he may remain in his house, &c. But still here also, the power of God must always be observed. Which power God exerted, so that Balaam could not on this account accomplish that which he wished; neither was Zacharias when he was returning from the temple able to speak, although he was willing.

7. In this cause, we reject the errors of the Manichæans, who denied that with regard to a good man, that the beginning of evil was from the infirmity of his free will. We reject also the doctrine of the Pelagians who say that fallen, and depraved, and sinful man has sufficient power through his free will to perform the holy commandment. Both these are confuted by the Holy Scripture, which saith to those: "God made man upright;" but to these it saith, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

*X. Of the Predestination of God, and of the Election of the Saints.*

1. God from eternity hath predestinated and chosen freely

of His own sole grace, with no respect of men, the saints, whom He willed to be saved in Christ, according to the declaration of the apostle : " God hath chosen us in Him, before the foundations of the world were laid." And again, " Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

2. Therefore God hath chosen us, not without means, although not on account of any merit in us, but in Christ, and on account of Christ, so that they who are now in Christ, and are united to Him by faith and by the Spirit, even these very persons are the elect, but they are reprobates who are out of Christ: according to the declaration of the apostle : " Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Finally, the saints are chosen in Christ by God, to a certain end ; which very end also, the apostle explains, and says, " He hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace." And although God knoweth who are His, and mention is made in a certain place in Scripture of the small number of the elect ; nevertheless, it is good to hope concerning all, nor is any one to be rashly numbered with reprobates. Certainly Paul, when he was writing to the Philippians, saith, " I thank my God for you all, [and he speaks concerning the whole Philippian Church,] for your fellowship in the gospel ; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it, even as it is meet that I should think this of you all." And when (Luke xiii.) the Lord was asked, " Are there few

that be saved?" the Lord does not answer, and say that either few or many would be saved or lost, but rather exhorts that every one should strive to enter in through the strait gate. As if He had said, your duty is not to inquire curiously about these things, but endeavour the more earnestly to enter by the right way into heaven.

Therefore we abhor the profane and vain babblings of those who say, "The elect are few, and seeing that it does not rest with me whether I am in the number of the few, I will not keep under my body. Others say, if I am predestinated or elected by God, it will not ultimately hinder me of salvation now verily finished, whatsoever I may design. But if I am in the number of the reprobates, neither faith nor repentance will profit me anything: seeing that the decree of God cannot be changed. Therefore all doctrines and admonitions are useless." For against these, that saying of the apostle militateth: "The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach, instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." And also, Augustine in the 14th chapter of his book, concerning the benefit of perseverance, and things appertaining to it, shews that both the grace of unmerited election and predestination, and also the admonitions and the wholesome doctrines of the gospel are to be preached. Therefore we disapprove of those who, being out of Christ, do curiously inquire, whether they are elected from eternity? And what has God decreed before all eternity with regard to them? For the preaching of the gospel is to be heard, and it is to be believed and obeyed: and if thou believest, and art in Christ, thou hast the indubitable proof that thou art elected. For the Father hath made known and revealed to us, in Christ, the



eternal counsel of His own predestination, according to the declaration of the apostle in 2 Tim. i., as I have explained. Therefore, in the first place, it is to be taught and considered before all things, how infinitely great the love of the Father towards us, is revealed to us in Christ. The Lord himself preacheth that which is daily heard by us in the gospel, by which means He calleth us, and saith unto us, (Matt. xi.,) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Also, (John iii.,) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son for the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Also, "It is not the will of your Father, that one of these little ones should perish," (Matt. xviii.) Therefore Christ is, as it were, the glass in which we may contemplate and behold our predestination. We have a sufficiently clear and firm testimony that we are written in the book of life, if we have communion or fellowship with Christ, and if He is in us, and is ours by true faith, then we are His. In the trial of our predestination, which is so very momentous, it consoleth us that the promises of God are universal to the faithful, because He himself hath said, "Ask, and ye shall receive," (Luke xi.) Every one that asketh, receiveth. Finally, because, with the universal Church of God we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven:" and because by the baptism of the Holy Ghost we are united to the body of Christ; and in His Church we often feed on His flesh and blood unto life eternal. Being strengthened and confirmed by these things, we are commanded, according to the instruction of St Paul, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

XI. *Concerning Jesus Christ, the true God and Man, the only Saviour of the World.*

1. We believe also and teach that the Son of God, our

Lord Jesus Christ, was predestinated and preordained from eternity, by the Father, to be the Saviour of the world ; and we believe that He was begotten not only of the Virgin Mary, when He took upon Him our flesh, not only before the foundations of the world were laid, but before all eternity, and verily, of the Father ineffably. For Isaiah, in chap. liii., said—"Who shall declare his generation?" and Micah saith, in chap. v., that His goings forth are from the days of eternity. For John also hath testified in the Gospel—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," &c. Therefore the Son, with regard to His divinity, is the true God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, not by dedication or by adoption, or by any dignity conferred, but by substance and by nature ; as the apostle John hath said again, (1 John v.)—"This is the true God, and eternal life;" and St Paul, in Heb. i., saith, He hath appointed the Son heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; also, He is the splendour and the brightness of the glory of the Father, and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power. For in the Gospel the Lord himself also hath said—"O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," (John xvii.) For in another place also it is written in the Gospel, the Jews sought to slay Jesus, because He had said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God, (John v. 18.) Therefore we abhor the profane and impious doctrine of Arrius, and of all Arrians, against the Son of God ; but more especially the blasphemies of Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, and all other Servetian blasphemies against the Son of God, which Satan devised in, and brought up from hell, and through them most audaciously and most impiously scatters throughout the world.

2. We believe and teach also that the same eternal Son of the eternal God was made the Son of man, of the seed of Abraham and David, not by the generation of man, as Hebion said ; but He was most purely conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, as the evangelical history diligently explaineth to us in Matt. i. ; and Paul says—"He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham ;" also the apostle John saith—"He that believeth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." Therefore the flesh of Christ was neither imaginary nor brought from heaven, as Valentinus and Marcion dreamed. Moreover, the soul in our Lord Jesus Christ was not without judgment, understanding, and consideration, as Apollinaris thought ; neither was the flesh without the soul, as Eunomius taught ; but the soul with its understanding and the flesh with its feelings, through those very faculties and feelings, sustained and endured real and exquisite pains during the time of His passion ; even as He himself testified and said—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;" and, "Now is my soul troubled," &c., (Matt. xxvi. ; John xii.)

3. Therefore we acknowledge that in the one and in the same Jesus Christ our Lord there are two natures or substances, the divine and the human ; and we say that these are so conjoined and united that they can never be disunited or destroyed, or confused, or mixed • but they remain for ever united and conjoined in one person, in the saving and permanent attributes of the natures ; so that we worship one Christ the Lord, not two : one, we say, veritable God and man God, according to the nature of the Father ; but human, according to His consubstantiality to us men, and made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted, (Heb. iv.) Therefore as we abhor the Nestorian doctrine, making two persons in one Christ, and dissolving the union of the person,

so, also, we utterly reject the madness of Eutychetes, and of the Monothelites, or Monophysicites, entirely expunging and destroying the attributes and properties of the human nature. Therefore, we by no means teach that Christ suffered according to His divine nature; or that Christ, according to His human nature, is still in this world, and so that He is everywhere. Nor do we either think or teach that the veritable body of Christ is departed from Him by purification; and that it is so deified that it has laid aside its own peculiar properties, as respects the body and the soul, and quite departed into the divine nature, and that He retains only one substance. Therefore, we do by no means approve of or receive the absurd, intricate, and obscure arguments and quibbles of Schuenkfeldius, and similar subtile speakers, and their vain constant disputes amongst themselves, neither are we Schuenkfeldians. But we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ truly suffered for us in the flesh, as St Peter saith, (1 Peter iv. 1.) We abhor that most profane and impious madness of the Jacobites and of all the Turks, which blasphemes the sufferings of our Lord. In the meantime, we confess that the Lord of Glory was crucified for us according to the words of St Paul in 1 Cor. ii. For we religiously and reverently receive and use the interpretations and explanations sought out of the Scriptures, and held fast from universal antiquity, in explaining and comparing those parts of Scripture which apparently differ.

4. We believe and teach that the same Jesus Christ our Lord, in His very flesh, in which He was crucified for us and died, arose from the dead; and that it was not another body that was raised from the grave, but the same; nor did He take upon Him spirit for flesh, but He retained His own true body, (Luke xxiv.) Therefore, whilst His disciples thought that they saw the spirit of the Lord, He shews to

them His hands and His feet, with the marks and wounds inflicted by the nails, and saith, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

5. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, in that His own veritable flesh and body in which He was crucified, ascended up far above all these visible heavens into the very highest heaven—namely, to the throne of God and of bliss; that is, to the right hand of the Father, which signifies an equal participation of glory and majesty; nevertheless, it is to be understood also as applying to that place of which our Lord, speaking in the Gospel, saith, (John xiv.,) "I go to to prepare a place for you." But also the apostle Peter saith, in Acts iii., that heaven must receive Christ until the time of the restitution of all things; and then this same Jesus will return from heaven to judgment; even then, when the wickedness of men shall be very great in the world; and when Antichrist, by its corrupt religion, superstition, and impiety, shall have obscured and darkened the true religion, and all true things, and shall have cruelly tormented, and laid waste, and destroyed the Church by bloodshed and fire, (Dan. xi.) But Christ will come again, according to His previous declarations; and at His coming He will consume and destroy Antichrist, and judge the quick and the dead. For the dead shall arise, and they who in that day (which is unknown to all creatures) shall remain alive, shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and all the faithful shall be caught up together at the same time to meet Christ in the air, that then they may enter with Him into the blissful mansions, to live for ever and ever with Him. But the unbelievers and the wicked shall descend with devils into hell, to burn for ever and ever, and never to be delivered from their torments, (Acts xvii.; 1 Thess. iv.; Mark xiii.; Matt. xxv.; 2 Tim. ii.)



Therefore we reject all those which deny the true resurrection of the flesh, or those who do not judge rightly concerning purified bodies, against whom Hieronymus wrote. We reject those who thought that devils also, and all the wicked, would be saved at one time or other, and that there will be an end of their torments: for the Lord himself hath expressly declared, in Mark ix., "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Moreover, we reject Jewish dreams, which say that before the day of judgment there will be a golden age on this earth; and that the pious shall occupy the kingdoms of this world, their enemies the wicked being oppressed and crushed. For the evangelical truth in Matt. xxiv. and xxv., and also in Luke xviii., and the apostolical doctrine in 2 Thess. ii., and in 2 Tim. iii. and iv., are found to declare far otherwise.

6. Moreover our Lord, by His sufferings and by His death, and by all the things which He accomplished and endured in His flesh for our sake, at His first advent, hath reconciled His heavenly Father to all believers, hath expiated sin, disarmed death, and hath vanquished damnation and hell; and by His resurrection from the dead, hath brought again, and merited, and restored to us life and immortality. For He himself is our righteousness, our life, and resurrection: finally, He is the fulness and absolution of all the faithful, and our salvation and most abundant sufficiency, (Rom. iv. and x.; 1 Cor. vii.; John vi. and xi.) For the apostle saith, it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, and ye are complete in Him, (Col. i. and ii.)

7. For we teach and believe, that this very Jesus Christ our Lord is the only and eternal Saviour of the human race, and so of the whole world, in whom as many as believed were

saved by faith, before the law, and under the law, and as many as have been saved under the gospel, and as many as shall be saved from this time, even unto the end of the world. Note—"By grace are ye saved through faith." And again, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." For the Lord himself saith in the Gospel, (John x.,) "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. I am the door of the sheep." Also, in another place in the same Gospel, (John viii.,) "Abraham saw my day, and was glad." But also Peter the apostle saith, in Acts iv., x., and xv.—"There is no salvation in any other, excepting in Christ alone. Neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved." Therefore we believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as were our fathers. For Paul also saith, in 1 Cor. x.—"That all our fathers did eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock, which followed them, and that rock was Christ." And so we read that John said, that Christ is "the Lamb of God, which was slain from the foundation of the world." And John the Baptist testifieth, that Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (Rev. xiii.; John i.) Hence, with ready mouth, we confess and teach, that Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer and Saviour of the world—our King and great High Priest, the true Messiah, and that long-expected and blessed and holy One, whom all the types of the law had prefigured, and whom all the predictions of the prophets had promised. For God hath performed His word, and hath sent Him to us, so that henceforward there is not another, neither may any other be expected by us. Nor does any

other exist, nor is any other wanted, so that now, we all simultaneously ascribe all our salvation, and all praise and glory, to Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, and in whom we acquiesce and rest, all other life guards being laid aside and renounced. For as many as seek salvation in any other thing, excepting in Christ alone, have fallen from the grace of God, and Christ is become of no effect unto them, (Gal. v.)

8. And in this cause, that we might say many things in a few words, whatsoever things are expressly defined and set forth in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the mystery of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and comprehended in the creeds and judgments of the first four most excellent and celebrated Synods—the Nicene, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, together with the creed of the blessed Athanasius, and all creeds similar to these, we believe with a sincere heart, and with a free and willing mouth we ingenuously confess, rejecting all that are contrary to these; and by this means, we hold fast the orthodox and universal Christian faith, inviolable, uncorrupted, sincere, pure, and entire: knowing that, in the aforementioned creeds, nothing is contained which is not in unison with the Word of God, and altogether useful and profitable unto the sincere explication of the faith.

## XII. *Of the Law of God.*

1. We teach that the will of God is explained to us by the law of God—what He willeth, and what He willeth not to be done by us—what is good and just, and what is wicked and unjust. Therefore we confess that the law is good, and righteous, and holy. And verily, in some instances, it has been written by the Spirit of God in the hearts of men, and then it is called the law of the divine nature; but at another time it was written by the finger of God, on the two tables

of Moses, and more copiously explained in the books of Moses. For the sake of perspicuity, we distinguish that into the moral law, which is comprehended in the Decalogue or two tables, and explained in the books of Moses ; also, that into the ceremonial law, which appointed ceremonies, and the worship of God ; and into the judicial, which treats of civil government and discipline.

2. We believe, that in this law of God, all the will of God, and all precepts necessary to every state of life, has been delivered to us. For otherwise the Lord would not have forbidden that anything should be either added to His law, or taken away from it ; and He commanded them particularly not to depart from it, and not to decline from it, by turning in their journey, either to the right or to the left.

3. We teach that this law was not given to men, that they might be justified by its observation ; but that by its discovery, we might forthwith acknowledge our infirmity, sin, and condemnation ; and despairing of our own powers, or strength, that we might be converted to Christ by faith. For the apostle expressly saith—"The law worketh wrath. And by the law is the knowledge of sin." And, "If there had been a law given which could have justified, or have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law ; but the scripture (namely, that of the law) hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Nor, indeed, is it possible that any flesh should be able to satisfy, and perfectly fulfil, the law of God, on account of the weakness in our flesh, or carnal nature, adhering to, and remaining in us, even unto the end of our life, (Rom vii.) For the apostle saith again—"That

which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, by sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh," (Rom. viii.) Therefore Christ is the perfection of the law, and our complete fulness, who, as He bore the curse of the law, whilst He was made an execration or curse for us, (Gal. iii.,) so He communicateth to us through faith His own fulness and nature, and imputeth to us His righteousness and obedience. Note—"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."

4. Wherefore the law of God is so far abrogated, inasmuch as it does not condemn us any more, neither does it work wrath in us. "For we are not under the law, but under grace." Moreover, Christ hath fulfilled all the figures of the law. Hence the shadows have ceased by the advent of the body, so that now we have in Christ both truth and all fulness. Nevertheless we do not on this account slight or reject the law. For we are mindful of the words of the Lord, saying, (Matt. v.,) "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." We know that the rules of virtues and of vices are delivered to us by the law of God. We know that the Scripture of the law, if it is explained through the gospel, is useful and profitable to the Church, and that on this account, the reading of it is not to be abolished from the Church. For although the face of Moses was covered with a veil, nevertheless the apostle declareth that the veil is taken away and abolished through Christ. Therefore we reject all those things which ancient and modern heretics have taught against the law of God.



XIII. *Concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of the Promises also, the Spirit, and the Letter.*

1. The gospel is indeed very different to the law. For the law worketh wrath, and pronounceth the curse. But the Gospel preacheth grace and blessing. And John also saith, in chap. i., "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Yet it is most certain that those which were before the law, and those which were under the law, were not altogether destitute of the gospel. For they had those remarkable evangelical promises, such as these:—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come." "The Lord thy God shall raise up a prophet out of the midst of thy brethren," &c., (Gen. iii., xxii., xlix.; Deut. xviii.; Acts iii.)

2. And verily we acknowledge that there were two sorts of promises given unto the fathers, like as also it is revealed to us. For some were of present, or earthly things, such as the promises concerning the land of Canaan, and of victories: and such as even to this day have a reference unto their daily bread. But then, there were other promises, even as also there are now, of heavenly and eternal things, namely, of Divine grace, forgiveness of sins, and life eternal, through faith in Jesus Christ. For the ancients had not only external or earthly, but also spiritual and celestial promises in Christ. For Peter saith concerning salvation, in 1 Peter i., "That the prophets inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us," &c. Hence also the apostle said, in Rom. i., "That the gospel of God had been promised before through the prophets of God, in the Holy Scriptures." Therefore it is quite clear that the ancients were not entirely destitute of all the gospel.

3. But although our fathers possessed the gospel in the Scriptures of the prophets, according to this manner, by which also they obtained salvation through faith in Christ, nevertheless, that joyful and blissful message is properly called the Gospel, which at the first was preached by John the Baptist, then by Christ the Lord himself, afterwards it was preached to the world through His apostles, and by the successors of the apostles, that God had performed that which He had promised from the beginning of the world, and had sent, yea, had given to us His only Son, and in Him reconciliation with the Father, forgiveness of sins, all fulness, and life eternal. Therefore the history written by the four evangelists, explaining by what means these things were done, and fulfilled, and completed by Christ, what things Christ taught, and what He performed, and that believers in Him do possess all fulness, is rightly named the Gospel. Also the preaching and the apostolical Scripture, whereby the apostles explain to us by what means the Son was given to us by the Father, and in Him all things pertaining to life and salvation, is rightly called the Evangelical Doctrine, so that verily, even to this day, if it is the sincere Word, it can never lose that excellent and glorious appellation or title.

4. The veritable and real preaching of the gospel is also called by the apostle, the Spirit, and the ministration of the Spirit, (2 Cor. iii.,) on this account, because it is made efficacious and life-giving through faith in the ears, yea, in the hearts of believers, through the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost. For the letter (which is ineffectual without the Spirit) signifieth indeed all the external things, but especially the doctrine of the law, which, without the Spirit and without faith in the hearts of men, without the living faith of believers, worketh wrath and exciteth sin. For which cause also it is called by the apostle "The ministration of death." For to this, that saying of the apostle applies, "The letter killeth,

but the Spirit giveth life." But the false apostles who took upon them to preach the gospel, corrupted it, by mixing the law with it, as if Christ could not save us without the law. Such were those who are called Hebionites, descended from Hebion an heretic, and those also who were formerly called Mineans: all of whom we reject, as we preach the pure gospel, teaching that believers are justified through the Spirit alone, and not through the law. Of which thing, a more copious explanation follows presently, under the title of justification.

5. And although the doctrine of the gospel, compared with the doctrine of the law of the Pharisees, appeared when it was first preached by Christ to be a new doctrine, (for to this very day, by the Papists it is called new, when compared with the doctrine received of the Papists,) yet Jeremiah, who prophesied concerning the New Testament, truly declareth the gospel to be not only an ancient doctrine, but the most ancient doctrine of all in the world. For God hath from eternity predestinated that the world should be saved through Christ, and hath opened to the world through the gospel, this His own predestination and eternal counsel, in 2 Tim. i. Hence it is clear that the religion of the gospel, and the evangelical doctrine, amongst all other religions, how numerous soever they have been, are, and shall be, is the most ancient religion of all. Therefore we say, that all those do shamefully and scandalously err, and do speak dishonourably and profanely of the eternal counsel of God, who often say that the evangelical doctrine and religion is scarcely the faith of thirty years. To whom that saying of the prophet Isaiah is applicable. (chan. v.) "Woe unto those which

*XIV. Concerning Repentance and the Conversion of Man.*

1. The gospel has joined to it the doctrine of repentance. For so the Lord hath said in the Gospel, (Luke xxiv.) "It behoveth that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in my name amongst all nations." And by repentance we understand an unfeigned sorrow of heart in sinner man, wrought by the Word of the gospel and by the Holy Ghost, and received by true faith, whereby sinner man being accused and convicted through the Word of God, forthwith acknowledgeth his own natural depravity and corruption, and all his sins, and on account of these he truly grieveth from his heart, and not only laments and ingenuously confesses the same with shame before God, but also with indignation abhorreth himself, and turns from his sins, resolving now to live holily and carefully, and that he will exercise himself in the diligent amendment of his life, and in the perpetual study of innocency and virtues, in which he will employ himself all the rest of the days of his life. And this, indeed, is true repentance, namely, a sincere conversion and turning to God, and to all that is good, but a real turning away from the devil, and from all evil. But we expressly say, that repentance is the sole and unmerited gift of God, and not the work of our powers. For the apostle, in 2 Tim. ii, orders the faithful minister diligently to instruct them that oppose the truth, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth. But now, that sinner spoken of in the Gospel, who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, and Peter bitterly weeping and lamenting his denial of the Lord, manifestly declare what the mind of the penitent ought to be, namely, truly sorrowing and

says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants : " and the publican, not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, but smiting upon his breast, said, " God be merciful to me a sinner." Nor do we doubt but that they were received into favour by God. For the apostle John saith, in 1 John i. 9, 10—" If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

2. And we believe that this ingenuous and sincere confession of sins, which is made to God alone, either privately between God and the sinner, or publicly in the temple where the general confession of sins is said, is sufficient ; nor is it necessary unto the obtaining of remission of sins that any one should confess his sins to the priest by whispering into his ears ; that in exchange, again, he might hear his absolution from him with the imposition of hands : for neither is there any command given for such a thing—neither is there any example recorded of such a thing in the Holy Scriptures. David protests, and says, " I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, ' I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,' and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." But, likewise, the Lord teaching us to pray, and at the same time to confess our sins, said, " After this manner, therefore, pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Therefore, it is necessary that we should confess our sins to God our Father, and return to peace with our neighbour, if we have offended him. Of which sort of confession, the apostle James says, " Confess your sins one to another." But if any one being oppressed by the burden of his sins and by perplexing tempta-



tions, wishes to seek counsel, instruction, and consolation privately, either from a minister of the Church, or from some other brother learned in the law and in the gospel of God, of this we do not disapprove. In the meantime, we greatly and especially approve of the general and public confession of sins which is accustomed to be said in the temple and in sacred assemblies, (of which also we have spoken before,) because it is agreeable with the Scriptures.

3. Concerning the keys of the kingdom of heaven, delivered by the Lord to His apostles, many prate wonderful things; and from these words they forge swords, javelins, sceptres, and crowns, and plenary power over the greatest kingdoms, and, finally, over the souls and bodies of men. But we, truly judging according to the word of the Lord, say that all ministers lawfully called possess and do exercise the keys, or the use of the keys, when they preach the gospel—that is, when they teach, exhort, console, rebuke, and admonish the people committed to their charge, and exercise wholesome discipline. For in this way they open the kingdom of heaven to the obedient, and shut it to the disobedient. The Lord promised these keys to His apostles in Matt. xvi., and performed it in Mark xvi. and in Luke xxiv., whilst He sends forth His disciples, and orders them to preach the gospel to all the world, and to forgive sins. The apostle, in 2 Cor. v., says, “That the Lord hath committed to his ministers the ministry of reconciliation;” and what this is, he presently explains, and says that it is the word or doctrine of reconciliation. And explaining these very things still clearer, he adds that the servants of Christ are charged or commissioned with an embassy in the name of Christ, as though God himself, through His ministers, exhorted the people, that they should be reconciled to God—namely, through faithful obedience to the gospel. Therefore, they exercise the keys

when they persuade men to faith and repentance, when they testify the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; thus they remit sins—thus they open the kingdom of heaven, and believers enter in. Very far different from those of whom the Lord hath spoken in the Gospel: “Woe unto you lawyers, because ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye neither enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in ye hindered.” Therefore, the ministers do rightly and efficaciously absolve, whilst they preach the gospel of Christ, and in this gospel, remission of sins, which is promised to each and to all the faithful and believers, whilst they testify also that forgiveness of sins belongeth to each, inasmuch as each one is baptized with the Holy Ghost. Nor do we think that absolution is made more efficacious by this thing, because it is singularly muttered into the ear of any one, or over the head of any one. But we judge that remission of sins through the blood of Christ, is to be diligently preached unto men, and each and all are to be admonished that remission of sins appertaineth unto them.

4. Moreover, the evangelical examples teach us that penitents ought to be watchful and careful in the study of the new life, and in the crucifying of the old man, and in raising up, and in invigorating the new man. For the Lord said to the paralytic whom He had healed, in John v., “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee.” To the adulteress also, whom He liberated, in John viii., He said, “Go, and sin no more.” By which words, truly, He did not mean that it was possible that a man should never sin whilst as yet he lives in this flesh, but He recommends vigilance, carefulness, and diligent study; that we should endeavour—I say by all means, and by prayers—to seek strength from God, lest we should relapse into those sins from which we have, as it were, arisen, and

lest we should be overcome by the flesh, by the world, and by the devil. Zaccheus the publican, being received by the Lord into favour, exclaims in the Gospel, (Luke xix.,) "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Therefore, according to this same manner we teach that restitution and mercy, and also alms, are verily necessary to penitents. And upon the whole, we exhort, and say in the words of the apostle, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," (Rom. vi. 12, 13.)

5. Therefore, we reject all the profane voices of those who abuse evangelical preaching, and say, "The return to God is easy; Christ hath expiated all sins; the forgiveness of sins is easy: what, therefore, will it hurt you to sin? Neither is repentance very much to be regarded," &c. In the meantime, we always teach that the way to God is open for all sinners, and that all sins are forgiven the faithful: that one sin against the Holy Ghost being excepted. On this account, we reject both the ancient and modern Navatians—especially, we abhor the lucrative doctrine of the Pope concerning repentance; and against his simony, and simoniacal indulgences, we often bring forward that saying of Simon Peter, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this thing, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." Also, we disapprove of those who imagine that they themselves, by their own performances and amendments, can satisfy God for sins committed. For we teach that Christ alone, by His meritorious sufferings, and by His precious death, is the only satisfaction,

propitiation, and expiation of all sins. In the meantime, nevertheless, as we have said before, we do not cease to urge the mortification of the flesh; but yet we say that this is not to be proudly obtruded upon God against His will, as a satisfaction for sins, but humbly presented from the loving heart and affectionate mind of the children of God, as the new obedience of gratitude for the complete deliverance and liberation procured for them through the meritorious death and atonement, and plenary satisfaction of the Son of God.

*XV. Concerning the True Justification of the Faithful.*

1. To justify, according to the apostle in his argument and disputation concerning justification, signifies to remit sins, to absolve from fault and from punishment, and to pronounce just. For to the Romans the apostle says, in Rom. viii., "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" To justify and to condemn are here opposed the one to the other. And in the Acts of the Apostles the apostle says, (chap. xiii.,) "Through Christ is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." For in the law also and in the prophets we read, in Deut. xxv., "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." Also we read in Isa. v., "Woe unto them which justify the wicked for reward!" But it is most certain that all we are sinners by nature and wicked, and before the tribunal of God convicted of impiety and guilty of death; but to be justified is this, to be absolved from sins, and from death eternal, by God the Judge, through the grace of Christ alone, and not on account of our merit or desert. For what can be clearer than what Paul hath said? (Rom. iii. 23,) "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; but



they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

2. For Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world, and sustained them in His own body upon the cross, and made satisfaction to Divine justice. Therefore God, on account of the meritorious sufferings and resurrection of Christ, is merciful to our sins, nor does He impute them to us, but He imputeth to us the righteousness of Christ for to be our righteousness, (2 Cor. v.; Rom. iv. ;) so that now we are not only washed and cleansed from sins and sanctified, but we are also endued with and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, and so absolved from sins, from eternal death, and from condemnation; finally, we are just in Him, and heirs of eternal life. Therefore, properly speaking, God alone justifieth us, and He justifies us on account of and through Christ only, not imputing to us our sins, but imputing to us His righteousness.

3. But because we receive this justification not through any works, but through the mercy of God, and through faith in Christ, on this account we teach and believe with the apostle, that sinner man is justified by faith alone in Christ, not by the law, or by any works; for the apostle saith, in Rom. iii., "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Also in Rom. iv., "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, [Gen. xv.] Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And again, in Eph. ii., "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast," &c. Therefore because faith receiveth Christ our righteousness,



and ascribeth all things to the grace of God in Christ; on this account justification is ascribed to faith, wholly and altogether on account of Christ; and not on this account, because it is our work. For it is the gift of God. Moreover, the Lord shews to us how it is that we receive Christ by faith in many places, in John vi., where He puts eating for believing, and believing for eating. For as by eating we receive food, so by believing we receive Christ, and are made partakers of Christ. Therefore we do not divide the benefit and blessing of justification, by ascribing it partly to the grace of God or Christ, partly to ourselves, or our love, or our works, or our merit; but we ascribe it solely to the grace of God in Christ through faith. But even charity and our works could not please God if they were done by unrighteous men; therefore it is necessary that we should be made righteous first, in order that we may love and do good works. Verily we are made righteous, according as we have said, through faith in Christ, by the mere and sole grace of God, who does not impute sins to us, but He imputeth to us the righteousness of Christ, and so He imputeth to us faith in Christ for righteousness. Also the apostle most clearly sheweth that love springeth from faith, saying, (1 Tim. i.,) "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.

4. Wherefore in this cause we are speaking not of feigned faith, not of that vain and idle, or dead faith, but we are speaking of living faith, and faith unfeigned, that which maketh us alive unto God, which, on account of Christ who quickeneth us, and maketh us alive unto God, and who is our life, and whom it apprehendeth, is said to be living faith, and declares itself alive by living works. Therefore James does not fight against this our doctrine, because he speaks of that vain, unprofitable, empty, and dead faith which certain persons boasted of; but they had not Christ dwelling in their

hearts by faith. This same apostle said, Works justify, not contradicting the apostle Paul, (for note, in another place, "he was unanimous with the rest of the apostles in ascribing salvation to the grace of God through faith in Christ, for Peter said, We believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. See Acts xv.") But he is here shewing that Abraham declared through his works, that his was a living and a justifying faith. For all the pious do this, who nevertheless trust and confide in Christ alone, not in any works. For note, the apostle hath said again, (Gal. ii,) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

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#### *XVI. Of Faith and Good Works, and their Reward, and the Merit of Man.*

1. For the Christian faith is not a human opinion and persuasion, but a most firm belief and constant assent of mind, also a most certain comprehension of the truth of God, set forth in the Scriptures and in the Apostolic Creed, and it also includeth the saving knowledge of God himself, who is the supreme good, and especially of the Divine promise, and of Christ, who is the fulness and perfection of all the promises. But this faith is the sole gift of God, which God

alone of His own grace giveth to His elect, according to the measure, and when, to whom, and as much as He himself willeth, and verily through the Holy Ghost, by the means of the preaching of the gospel, and by the faithful word. This faith also has its increasings, which also unless they were given by God, the apostles would not have said, "Lord, increase our faith," (Luke xvii.)

2. And verily all these things which we have hitherto said concerning faith, the apostles also have taught before us. For St Paul, in Heb. xi., says, "Now faith is the substance [or firm subsistence] of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" that is, the clear and certain comprehension of things not seen. And the same apostle again, in 2 Cor. i., says, "All the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him Amen." To the Philippians, in chap. i., the same apostle says that it was given to them that they should believe in Christ. Also, in Rom. xii., "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Again, in 2 Thess. iii., he says, "All men have not faith;" and in Rom. x., "They have not all obeyed the gospel." But Luke also testifieth, and says, in Acts xiii., "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed." Hence the same apostle again calleth faith, "the faith of God's elect," in Titus i. And again, in Rom. x., "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In other places he often ordereth us to pray for faith.

3. This same apostle calleth faith, effectual or efficacious, and that it "worketh by love," in Gal. v. Also it pacifieth the conscience, and openeth a free access unto God, that we might draw near unto Him with confidence, and obtain from Him all profitable and necessary things. The same faith retaineth us in our duty, which we owe to God and to our neighbour, and strengtheneth patience in adversity, and formeth and practiseth the true confession; and, that we may say many things

in one word, it produceth good fruits, and good works of every sort.

4. For we truly teach that all good works are generated, or take their rise from living faith, through the Holy Spirit, and are done by the faithful according to the will or rule of the Word of God. For Peter the apostle saith, in 2 Peter i., "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance," &c. But we have said before that the law of God, which is the will of God, prescribes to us the pattern of good works. And the apostle says, in 1 Thess. iv., "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, and that no man should oppress or defraud his brother in any business." Therefore the works of men's invention are not approved of by God; and that worship which is of the appointment of man's will, and which Paul, in Col. ii, calls will-worship, is not pleasing to God: concerning which things the Lord also in the Gospel (Matt. xv.) saith, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Therefore we reject works of this sort, and we approve of and inculcate those works only which are according to the will and commandment of God. Those works ought to be performed to Him, not that by these we might merit life eternal, for the apostle says, "Eternal life is the gift of God;" neither out of ostentation, which the Lord hath rejected in Matt. vi.; nor yet for gain, which He himself also hath rejected in Matt. xxiii.; but unto the glory of God, to adorn our vocation, and to be performed in gratitude to God, and to the benefit of our neighbour. For again our Lord saith in the Gospel, (Matt. v.) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." But the apostle Paul also, in Eph. iv., saith, "Walk worthy of your vocation;" also, in



Col. iii, he saith, "Whatsoever ye do, either in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." The same apostle, in 1 Cor. x., saith, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's benefit;" and in Titus iii., "Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

5. Therefore although we teach with the apostle that a man is justified freely through faith in Christ, and not through any good works, nevertheless we do not undervalue or reject good works. Seeing we know that a man is not created anew, and regenerated through faith in Christ, that he might be idle, but rather that he should unceasingly do those works which are profitable and good. Therefore the Lord says in the Gospel, (Matt. vii.,) "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit;" and again, (John xv.,) "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Finally, the apostle saith, in Eph. ii., "We are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." And again, in Titus ii., "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Therefore we reject all those who despise good works, and who vainly prate and say that they are unprofitable and not to be regarded. In the meantime, as we have also said before, we do not judge or imagine that we are saved through our good works, and that they are so necessary to salvation as that without them no man was ever saved; for we are saved by grace through and by the merit of Christ alone. Good works are necessarily generated from faith, but salvation is improperly attributed to these, but most properly ascribed to grace. For that most remarkable and most mo-



mentous declaration and decision of the apostle Paul in Rom. xi., is here to be observed, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."

6. But good works which are done by us through faith are pleasing to God, and are approved of by Him; because they which do good works please God on account of faith in Christ; which good works likewise are wrought through the Holy Ghost by the grace of God. For St Peter, in Acts x., says, "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And Paul, in Col. i., saith, "We do not cease to pray for you, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, and that ye might please him in all things, being fruitful in every good work." Therefore we diligently teach, not the false or the vain philosophical virtues, but real good works, and the genuine duties of a Christian man; and, with as much diligence and earnestness as we can, we inculcate these things upon all, rejecting the deceit and hypocrisy of all those who with their mouth praise and profess the gospel, but dishonour it by their unholy life; denouncing, in this case, the dreadful threatenings of God; and finally, by exhorting, consoling, rebuking, and admonishing, and setting forth the most ample promises of God and His gracious rewards.

7. Moreover, we teach that God giveth ample rewards to them that work righteousness, according to that saying of the prophet in Jer. xxxi., "Refrain thy voice from weeping; for thy work shall be rewarded." In the Gospel also the Lord hath said, (Matt. v. and x.,) "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of

these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Nevertheless, we refer this reward which the Lord giveth, not to the merit of man who receiveth it, but to the goodness, beneficence, and liberality, and grace and truth of God promising and giving; who, whilst he owes nothing to any man, hath nevertheless promised that He will give a reward to His faithful worshippers; who, in the meantime giveth to them that grace whereby they might worship Him. Besides, many things unworthy of God, and very many imperfections, are found in the works even of the saints; but because God receives them into favour, and, on account of Christ, embraces them working, He abundantly giveth to them the promised reward; for otherwise our righteousnesses are compared to filthy rags in Isa. lxiv. But the Lord also says in the Gospel, (Luke xvii.,) "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

8. Therefore although we teach that a reward is given by God to our good works, nevertheless we teach at the same time, with Augustine, that God crowns not our merits, but His own gifts; and therefore whatever reward we receive, we say that this is grace also; and, indeed, the more as grace than as a reward: because whatever good works we do, we do them more through God than we do through ourselves, and because Paul saith, in 1 Cor. iv., "What hast thou which thou hast not received? But if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" And hence, also, the blessed martyr Cyprian concludes, "In nothing ought we to glory in ourselves, seeing nothing is of us." Therefore we reject the errors of those who so defend the merits of men, that they make void the grace of God.

XVII. *Concerning the Universal and Holy Church of God, and the only Head of the Church.*

1. But seeing that God from the beginning willed men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, it was altogether absolutely necessary that there should have been a Church, as there is now, and always shall be in ages to come, even unto the end of the world ; and the Church is the assembly of the faithful called from and collected out of the world,—that assembly, I say, and communion of all saints,—namely, of those who truly know and who sincerely worship the true God, in Christ the Saviour, through the Word, and through the Holy Ghost, and who finally do graciously participate by faith in all the benefits and blessings procured by Christ. These are all citizens of one city, living under the same Lord, under the same laws, in the same participation of all benefits. For the apostle hath called them “fellow-citizens with the saints, and the household of God ;” he calleth the saints the “faithful upon the earth, sanctified by the blood of the Son of God,” (Eph. ii. ; 1 Cor. vi.,) concerning whom only that article of the Creed is to be understood, “I believe that there is a holy universal Church, the communion of saints.”

2. And seeing that there is always only one God, and one Mediator between God and men, Jesus the Messiah, also one Shepherd of the universal flock, one Head of this body ; finally, one Spirit, one salvation, one testament or covenant, it followeth of necessity that there is only one Church, which, on that account, we call the catholic—that is, the universal Church ; and it is universal, because it is scattered throughout all parts of the world, and extends itself unto all times, being confined to no places or times. Therefore we reject the Donatists, who limited the Church into I know not what corners of Africa. Nor do we approve of the Romish clergy, who boast that the Roman Church only is the universal Church.

3. Verily the Church appears to be divided into parts or various societies—not that it is really divided or torn asunder in itself, but more on account of the diversity of members in that very distinction. For the one form the Church militant, but the other the Church triumphant. The Church militant, which as yet liveth on this earth, fighteth and contendeth both with the flesh and with the world, and with the devil, the prince of this world, with sin, and with death. But the Church, which received such rude treatment in this world, all its enemies being overcome, now triumphs in heaven and rejoices before the Lord; nevertheless these have a communion or conjunction between themselves.

4. And the Church militant on earth has always had very many distinct and separate Churches, all of which, nevertheless, are accounted the true universal Church according to verity. Note—"That is, if each and all of the members are believers in Christ, and if they have been saved by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." This Church of God was built up in one way before the law, through the patriarchs; in another way, through the law by Moses, and in another way by Christ through the gospel. Generally speaking, two distinct people are enumerated in the Scriptures—namely, the nation of the Israelites, and the multitude of nations called the Gentiles. Also there are two Testaments, the Old and the New. And the household of God consists of all those who have been gathered into the Church, both from among the Jews and from among the Gentiles. Yet of all these people there has been, and there is now, but one society; one salvation in one Messiah, in whom verily the members of the one body are all united under one Head, in the same faith; also, all participating in the same spiritual meat, and in the same spiritual drink. Nevertheless we here acknowledge that there have been at



sundry times divers declarations in relation to the promised, but now manifested Messiah ; and the ceremonial or ritual law being taken away or abolished, that a far brighter light now shines before and in us, and more abundant and excellent gifts are given, and a more complete deliverance.

5. This holy Church of God is called the house of the living God, composed or built of living and spiritual stones, and built upon the immovable Rock, upon that foundation than which other cannot be laid ; and on this account it is also called "the pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Tim. iii.) Nor does she err, or stray, or wander, so long as she leans on the Rock Christ, even the foundation of the prophets and the apostles. No wonder if she errs and strays, as often as she deserts Him who alone is the Truth. The Church is also called a virgin, and the bride of Christ, and in truth His only and beloved. For the apostle, in 2 Cor. xi., saith, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The Church is called a flock of sheep, under one Shepherd, Christ, both by Ezekiel (chap. xxxiv.) and by John, (chap. x.) She is also called the body of Christ, because all the faithful are living members of Christ, under the Head, Christ.

6. For He is the Head which hath the pre-eminence in the body, and from whence the body draws life, by whose Spirit it is governed in all things, and hath its nourishments that it might grow. Also Christ is the only Head of the body, and hath congruity and agreement with the body. Therefore the Church cannot have any other Head but Christ. For as the Church is a spiritual body, even so it behoveth, and it is meet, that she should have a spiritual Head, agreeable, or in congruity with herself. Neither can she be governed by any other spirit but the Spirit of Christ. Also Paul, in Col. i., saith, "He is the head of the body, the church : who



is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." And the same apostle again, in Eph. v., saith, " Christ is the head of the church, and it is he who giveth salvation to the body." And again, in Eph. i., he saith, " That Christ is the head of the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Likewise in Eph. iv., " May we grow up into him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ : in whom the whole body, being fitly joined together, maketh increase." Therefore we do not approve of the doctrine of the Romish clergy introducing their own Romish Pontiff, and making him the universal shepherd and the supreme head of the whole Church militant here upon earth, and also that he himself is the real vicar of Christ, and that he possesseth, as they call it, plenary power in the Church, and the supreme dominion over the Church. For we teach that Christ alone is now, and will always and for ever remain, the only universal Shepherd, and our supreme and great High Priest before God the Father, and that He himself performs all the offices of Priest and Shepherd in His Church, even unto the end of the world, and so that we want no other vicar who is absent from us. But Christ is always present with His own, and He is the living Head of the Church. He himself most strictly prohibited to His apostles, and to the successors of His apostles, a primacy and lordship and dominion in the Church. Therefore whosoever they are that contradict and oppose this illustrious truth, and introduce into the Church a government different to that of Christ, who does not see that they ought rather to be reckoned amongst those concerning whom the apostles of Christ prophesied ? Peter in 2 Peter ii., and Paul in Acts xx., 2 Cor. xi., and 2 Thess. ii., and also in other places.

7. But the Roman head being taken away, we bring no

tumult or insubordination into the Church of Christ: seeing we teach that the government of the Church being delivered to us by the apostles, is sufficient to retain the Church in good and just order, although it is said to this day that the Church wants a head, like that of the Roman head, to keep the Church in order, which from the beginning was not tumultuous or insubordinate. The Roman head does, indeed, maintain his own tyranny—corruption and wickedness being introduced into the Church; but in the meantime he impedes, opposes, and, with all the powers that he possesses, he hinders the righteous reformation of the Church.

8. With regard to us, it is objected that there were various controversies and disagreements in our Churches after they separated themselves from the Roman Church, and that therefore they are not the true Churches. Just as if there had never been any divisions in the Roman Church, and controversies also, and verily concerning religion, carried on not only in the schools, but in the sacred cathedrals in the midst of the people. Truly we know that the apostle hath said, in 1 Cor. xiv., “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” And whereas there is amongst you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal? But yet it cannot be denied that God was in the Apostolical Church, and that the Apostolical Church was the true Church, in which, nevertheless, there were controversies and divisions. For the apostle Paul reproves the apostle Peter; Barnabas differs from Paul, (Gal. ii. ; Acts xv.) A grave controversy arose in the Church at Antioch, amongst those who preached one Christ, as Luke relates in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Many weighty and momentous controversies have always been in the Church, and the most learned and illustrious teachers of the Church have differed amongst themselves concerning things not of a light, but of the utmost

importance ; but in the meantime the Church did not by these controversies cease to be what it really was. For so it pleases God, by these ecclesiastical controversies, to set forth the glory of His name ; and, finally, by these to illustrate His truth, and that those which are approved might be made manifest. Moreover, as we do not acknowledge any other head of the Church but Christ, so we do not acknowledge the Romish Church (which boasts itself as the true) to be the true Church, but we teach that that is the true Church in which the signs or marks of the true Church are found, which are especially the scriptural and sincere preaching of the Word of God, even as it hath been delivered to us in the books of the prophets and of the apostles, who all direct us unto Christ, who hath said, in the Gospel in John x., “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers.” And they which believe in and obey Christ, these are in the Church—these have one faith, one spirit, and on this account they adore one God only—Him alone they worship in spirit and in truth—Him they love with their whole heart, and with all their powers : they call upon Him through Christ the only Mediator and Intercessor : they seek no other righteousness and life but that which is in Christ, and through faith in Him, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ; for they know and acknowledge that Christ alone is the Head and foundation of the Church ; and being built upon this foundation, they daily renew themselves by repentance, they bear with patience the cross that is laid upon them, and also being knit together in unfeigned love with all the members of Christ, by this they declare themselves to be the disciples of Christ, by persevering in the bond of peace and of holy

unity : at the same time, also, they partake of the sacraments instituted by Christ, and delivered to us by the apostles ; nor do they use these otherwise than as they have received from the Lord. For that saying of the apostle is to be observed by all, in 1 Cor. xi., "I have received from the Lord that which I also delivered unto you." Therefore we reject those Churches as adversaries to the true Church, which are not such, as we have heard, they ought to be ; although in the meantime they may boast of a succession of bishops, unity, and antiquity. Yea, the apostles have given us a commandment that we should flee from idolatry and from Babylon, and that we should not partake or unite with her, lest we should be made the partakers of the plagues of God, (1 Cor. x. ; 1 John v. ; Rev. xviii. ; 2 Cor. vi.)

9. But we reckon that communion and union with the true Church of Christ is of so great importance, that we deny that those can live before God who do not unite and communicate with the true Church of God, but separate themselves from her. For as there was not any salvation out of the ark of Noah, the world perishing in the Deluge, so we believe that out of Christ, who communicates Himself to His elect to be enjoyed in the Church, that there is no certain salvation ; and therefore we teach that those who wish and long to live, ought not to separate themselves from the true Church of Christ.

10. These signs being mentioned, we nevertheless do not so rigidly enclose the Church, as that we should teach that all those are out of the Church who do not receive the sacraments—that is to say, not indeed willingly absenting themselves, nor yet through contempt, but rather being compelled by inevitable necessity, they unwillingly abstain from them, or are destitute of the means : or, those in whom faith lan-



guisheth for a time; nevertheless, it is not utterly extinguished, nor does it quite cease: or, those in whom sins of infirmity and errors are found. For we know that God had some friends in the world besides those which were of the people of Israel. We know what happened to the people of God in the Babylonish captivity, in which they were deprived of their sacrifices for seventy years. We know what happened to St Peter, the denier of the Lord, and what is accustomed to happen daily to the elect of God, to erring and weak believers. Besides, we know what, in the times of the apostles, the Churches of the Galatians and of the Corinthians were, whom the apostle accuses of many and grievous sins, and yet he calls them the holy Churches of Christ. Yea, sometimes it comes to pass that God, in His righteous judgment, permits the truth of His Word, and the true faith, to be so obscured, and lacerated, and mutilated, that it appears extinct, and that no Church remaineth any more; even as we see it came to pass in the days of Elijah, and at other times; see 1 Kings xix.; Rev. vii.; 2 Tim. ii. In the meantime, God hath in this world, and in the midst of this thick darkness, His own true worshippers, not a few, but seven thousands and more. For the apostle also says, "The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his," &c. Hence, also, the Church may be called invisible, not that men are invisible from which the Church is gathered, but because it is hid to our eyes, and known to God only, for human judgment may often be mistaken.

11. Again, all those which are numbered in the Church, are not holy, and living, and true members of the Church. For there are many hypocrites, who publicly hear the Word of God, and publicly receive the sacraments, also they call upon God through Christ alone, they also worship God, and



perform duties of charity; and for a time seem to endure with patience the calamities of this life; but they are inwardly destitute of the true illumination of the Spirit, and of faith, and of sincerity of heart, and of final perseverance. Also, those who are such, are at length generally found out. For the apostle says, in 1 John ii., "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." And yet, whilst these pretend to be pious, although they are not of the Church, nevertheless they are numbered in the Church; as betrayers in a republic, before they are found out, are reckoned among the citizens, and as the cockle, or darnel, and tares are found amongst the wheat. Wherefore the Church of God is rightly compared to a net, which draws fishes of every sort, and to a field, in which are found both tares and wheat, in Matt. xiii. Wherefore it is necessary to be very careful, that we do not judge before the time, and endeavour to exclude, and to cut off those whom the Lord willeth not to be excluded or cast out, or whom we cannot separate from the Church without injuring the Church. Again, it is requisite to be watchful, lest whilst the pious are asleep, the impious, for the sake of gain, should do damage to the Church.

12. Moreover, we diligently teach that it is to be observed, in what the verity and unity of the Church principally consists, lest we should rashly excite and foment schisms in the Church. For it is not placed in ceremonies and rites, but more in the verity and in the unity of the catholic faith. For the catholic faith (or, as St Paul calls it, in Titus i., "The faith of God's elect;" and, in ver. 4, "The common faith;" because it is common to all the regenerate) was not delivered to us by human laws, but by the Divine Scripture, of which the apostolic creed is an abstract. Hence we read that there was a diversity of rites amongst the ancients, but no man

ever thought that that liberty ever dissolved ecclesiastical unity. Therefore in doctrines, and in the true and peaceable preaching of the gospel of Christ, and in rites expressly delivered to us by the Lord, we say, that we are to agree, and to maintain the peace of the Church: hence we especially inculcate that exhortation of the apostle in Philip. iii.—“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”

XVIII. *Concerning the Ministers of the Church, and the Institution of them, and their Duties.*

1. God, for the gathering together and for the building up of the Church for Himself, and for the governing and preserving of the same, hath always employed ministers, and still employs them, and, moreover, will employ them as long as the Church shall be on the earth. Therefore the origin, institution, and office of ministers, is most ancient and of God himself; ordination is not a new thing, or of men. Verily God could by His own power immediately join to Himself a Church from amongst men, but He chose rather to work with men through the ministry of men. On this account, ministers are to be viewed and considered, not only as ministers through themselves, but as the ministers or servants of God, seeing that through them God worketh the salvation of men. Therefore we should be careful, lest, with regard to those things which relate to our conversion and edification, we should so attribute everything to the secret power of the Holy Spirit, as that we should make void ecclesiastical ministry. For it is right, that we should always be mindful of the words of the apostle, in Rom. x., “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Therefore faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” And because

the Lord hath said in the Gospel, (John xiii.,) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." And because, a man of Macedonia appearing to Paul in a vision whilst he was in Asia, entreated him and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," (Acts xvi.) And in another place, the same apostle hath said, "We are labourers together with God: ye are the husbandry, and building of God, (1 Cor. iii.) And yet again, we must be aware, lest we should ascribe too much to ministers, and to the ministry, here also being mindful of the words of the Lord, saying in the Gospel, (John vi.,) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And of the words of the apostle, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," (1 Cor. iii.) Therefore we believe that God by His Word teaches us publicly through His ministers, but that the Holy Spirit moves internally on the hearts of His own elect, and worketh faith in them; and, on this account, that all the glory of this infinite benefit rightly belongeth unto God. But as it respects this thing, it has been spoken of in the first chapter of this exposition.

2. And, indeed, from the beginning of the world, God hath employed as teachers the most excellent of all men in the world, (simple indeed in many things, as it respects worldly wisdom or philosophy, but most learned and illustrious in true theology,) namely, the Patriarchs, with whom God not unfrequently spoke through His angels. For the Patriarchs were the prophets or teachers of their age, whom God for this purpose willed that they should live many

ages, that they might be as fathers and lights of the world. Moses followed them, with the prophets, very much celebrated throughout the world. But after these, our heavenly Father sent His only-begotten Son, to be the infallible and most perfect Teacher of the world, in whom is hid infinite and Divine wisdom, and by whom it is communicated to us, through that most sacred, pure, and most perfect doctrine of all, even through the gospel. For He himself chose for Himself His disciples, whom He made apostles. And these going out into all the world, gathered Churches everywhere, through the preaching of the gospel. And then, they ordained pastors in all the Churches in the world, according to the command of Christ, whose successors have hitherto taught and governed the Church. Therefore, as God gave to His ancient people, the patriarchs, together with Moses and the prophets; so, to the people of the New Testament, He sent His only-begotten Son, together with the apostles and teachers of the Church.

3. Moreover, the ministers of the new people are called by various names. For they are called in 1 Cor. xii. and Eph. iv., apostles, prophets, evangelists, bishops, presbyters, pastors, and teachers. The apostles abode in no particular or certain place, but they collected and gathered together various Churches throughout the world, which, when they had established, the apostles departed, and ordained pastors everywhere in each Church, in place of themselves. Formerly the prophets were called seers, or foretellers of future events, but they also interpreted the Scriptures. Such also are found even unto this day. The writers of evangelical history were called evangelists; but they also were preachers of the gospel of Christ; for the which cause, Paul also orders Timothy to fulfil the work of an evangelist. But bishops are the overseers or the watchmen of the Church, who dispense

food and necessary things to the Church. . . . The presbyters are the elders, and as it were the senators and fathers of the Church, governing the same by wholesome counsel. The pastors also feed and guard the flock or sheepfold of the Lord, and see after and consult about those things which are necessary for it. The doctors, or teachers, instruct and teach the true faith and piety. Therefore now it is lawful and right to declare that bishops, presbyters, pastors, and teachers, are ministers of the Church.

4. Moreover, in subsequent times, many more names or titles of ministers in the Church have been introduced into the Church of God. For some have been ordained patriarchs, others archbishops, others suffragans, also metropolitans, archpresbyters, deacons also, and sub-deacons, acoluthes or waiting-men, exorcists, singers, porters and guardians, and I know not what others, as cardinals, prepositors, and priors, fathers, (minor and major,) ordinaries, (major and minor.) But as respects all these which formerly have been or now are, we are in nowise solicitous. The apostolical doctrine delivered to us by the ministers is sufficient for us.

5. Also, seeing that we know of a certainty that monks, and orders or sects of monks, were neither appointed by Christ, nor yet by His apostles, we teach that these are useless, yea, injurious to the Church of God. For although formerly, when they who were monks or single, and who worked with their own hands for their own maintenance, neither were burdensome to any, but were obedient to the pastors of the Churches everywhere, as laymen, were tolerable, nevertheless now, all the world sees and knows what they are. They make, or pretend to make, I know not what vows, and live a life quite contrary to their vows; so that



the best of them verily deserve to be numbered with them concerning whom the apostle said, in 2 Thess. iii., "We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." Therefore we neither have such in our Churches, nor do we teach that they ought to be in the Churches of Christ.

6. No man ought to usurp the honour of the ecclesiastical ministry to himself, nor ought he of his own will to assume to himself that office, either by briberies or by any other devices. The ministers of the Church should be called by ecclesiastical and lawful election; that is, they should be religiously chosen by the Church, or by those deputed by the Church for this purpose, in a righteous way, and without tumult, strifes, and contention. Not any or whosoever will should be chosen, but suitable men, endued with a righteous and holy education, with pious eloquence and unfeigned prudence; and, finally, that they should be remarkable for moderation and honesty of life, according to the apostolic rule, which is given to us in chap. iii. of the First Epistle to Timothy, and in chap. i. of the Epistle to Titus. And they which are chosen should be ordained by the elders with public prayers, and laying on of hands. Here we reject all those who run of their own accord, seeing they were not chosen, or sent, or ordained. We reject vain, light, jesting and trifling ministers and those not furnished with gifts necessary for a pastor. In the meantime, we acknowledge that the innocent simplicity of some pastors in the ancient Church, has sometimes been more profitable to the Church than the various, exquisite, jocular, and haughty learning of some. Hence, to this very day, we do not reject the honest simplicity of those who yet are not altogether ignorant and unskilful. For the apostles of Christ do truly declare that all believers in Christ are priests, but not on that account

ministers, but because through Christ all the faithful are made kings and priests that we might be able to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God, namely, thanksgiving and praise to God continually. But there is a very great difference between the offices of priests and of ministers. For that is common to all Christians, as we have just now said, but not this. Neither have we taken a ministry out of the midst of the Papal Church, seeing we have rejected the papistical priesthood as not belonging to the Church of Christ.

7. Truly in the New Testament, the priesthood of Christ is no longer what it was to the ancient people, because that had external unction, sacred vests, and a great many ceremonies which were types of Christ; who coming, and fulfilling all these things, abrogated them, (Heb. v.) But He himself remaineth a priest for ever; from whom, lest we should derogate anything, to none of our ministers do we give the title of priest. For our Lord himself did not ordain any priests in the Church of the New Testament, who, through a power received from the suffragan, should offer daily the host, I say, as the very flesh, and the very blood of the Lord, for the living and the dead, but ministers who should teach the gospel and administer the sacraments. For Paul, clearly and briefly explaining how we ought to think and account of the ministers of the New Testament and of the Christian Church, and what we should attribute to them, says, in 1 Cor. iv., "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Therefore the apostle willeth that we should account of ministers as of servants, that is the servants of Christ; but the apostle mentioned the word *uperetas*, which has particular reference unto pilots, or men not living to themselves, nor to their own will, but to the will of others, to their masters, I say, on whose command they entirely depend. For the minister of the Church who is so solely,

and really so, in all his duties and services, ought not to indulge his own will, but he is ordered to follow that only which he receives in the injunctions and the commands from his Lord and Master. And in the present day, it is expressly declared in the Word of God, who the Lord and Master is, namely, Christ, to whom in all the affairs of the ministry the ministers must give account. Moreover, the apostle, in order that he might more fully explain the ministry, declares that the ministers of the Church are the stewards, or the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Truly, the apostle hath called the gospel of Christ, "the mysteries of God," in many places, but especially in Eph. iii. Antiquity hath also called the sacraments of Christ, mysteries. For this cause the ministers of the Church are called to this work, that they might preach the gospel of Christ, and administer the sacraments to the faithful. For in another place we read in the Gospel, (Luke xii.,) of the faithful and wise servant, whom the lord appointed over his household, that he might give them a portion of meat in due season. Again, in another place in the Gospel, a man leaving his house, takes his journey into a far country, and gives power or his substance to his servants in the house, and to each one his own work.

8. Therefore, now, it is right also that we should speak concerning the power and duty of the ministers of the Church. Concerning this power, some have disputed so laboriously, that to the utmost of their power they have hidden all the principal and essential things in the earth, and that contrary to the command of the Lord, who forbade dominion and lordship to His disciples, but very greatly indeed commended humility, (Luke xxii.; Matt. xviii. and xx.) Verily, there is indeed another power, infinite and absolute, and that which is called judicial power. By this power, all things in all worlds are subject to Christ the Lord, even as

He himself testified and said, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth." And again, "I am the first and the last: behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of hell and of death." Also, "He that hath the key of David: he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," (Matt. xxviii.; Rev. i. and iii.) This power the Lord reserves to Himself; nor does He transfer this power to any one, so as that He should henceforward stand still as an unconcerned spectator, His ministers only working. For Isaiah, in chap. ix. and xxii., says, "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder." And again, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." For Christ does not give the government to others to be placed upon their shoulders, but He himself still maintains and exercises His own power, governing all things. Furthermore, there is another power, official or ministerial, derived from and limited by Him who exercises full power. That is more like unto an office or ministry than it is to a government. For the Lord gives to some in His house power over His household, by which power He gives them the keys, whereby they may admit into His house, or exclude from His house, those whom their Lord either admitteth or excludeth. According to this power, the minister does his duty when he does that which he has been ordered to do by his Lord and Master; and the Lord himself confirms that which he does, and makes the very work of his servant to be esteemed and recognised, as agreeable to His own will. To which these evangelical declarations do doubtless appertain: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Also, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." But unless the minister shall have explained all things as he has been



ordered by his Lord, and if he has gone contrary to the rule of faith, then that which he has done is made void by his Lord. Moreover, the ecclesiastical power of the ministers of the Church is that function or commission whereby ministers do indeed govern the Church ; but they do all things in the Church, even as the Lord has commanded in His Word. Which things, when they have performed, they are reckoned, as it were, faithful by the Lord himself. And concerning the keys, something has been said before.

9. But one and equal power, or charge, or commission is given to all the ministers in the Church. Verily, from the beginning, bishops or presbyters have governed the Church by their united services ; no one preferred himself to another, or claimed superior power or dominion over his fellow-bishops. For they were mindful of the words of the Lord : “ He who willeth to be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Also, they preserved themselves in humility, and assisted each other by turns, in the mutual duties of governing and of taking care of the Church. In the meantime, for the sake of preserving order, one certain Christian, or one of the ministers, called an assembly, and set forth the things to be considered in the assembly, collected also the opinions and judgments of others. Lastly, he was exceedingly careful, lest by any means confusion should arise. St Peter is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have done thus, who, nevertheless, was not on that account preferred to the others, nor endued with more power than the others. For Cyprian the martyr, speaking concerning the sincerity of the clergy, most rightly says : “ What Peter was, so were also the other apostles, for they were all endued with the same fellowship, honour, and power ; but a beginning of a departure from unity has taken place, as may be demonstrated by one Church.” Also St Hieronymus, in his commentary upon the



Epistle of Paul to Titus, refers to things of the same sort, and saith: "Before the studies in religion were made by the instinct of the devil, the Churches were governed by the common counsel of the presbyteries of the Church; but afterwards, every one thought those whom he had baptized, his—not Christ's; then it was decreed, that one chosen out of the presbyteries should be placed over the rest, to whom all the care of the Churches should belong; and thus the seeds of schisms were raised." Nevertheless, Hieronymus does not set forth this decree as divine; for presently he adds: "Likeas the presbyteries know that, according to the custom of the Church, they were subjected to him which had been placed over them; so the bishops knew more from custom than from the truth and the mind of the Lord; that they were greater than the presbyteries, and that they ought in general to rule the Church." He says these things. And on that account, no man should by a law prohibit men from returning to the ancient constitution of the Church of God, and from receiving that, in preference to human custom.

10. The duties of ministers are various, which nevertheless in general may be restrained to two things, in which are comprehended all things pertaining to the evangelical doctrine of Christ, and to the lawful administration of the sacrament. For it is the duty of ministers to gather together the sacred assembly, and in it to explain the Word of God, and to accommodate the universal doctrine to the capacity and to the benefit of the Church, so that those things which are taught might profit the hearers and edify the faithful. It is the duty of ministers, I say, to teach the ignorant, to exhort also, and urge the lingerers, and those that are loitering, to proceed in the way of the Lord, and to comfort and confirm the weak-hearted, and to strengthen them against the various temptations of Satan, to rebuke sinners, to recall the wan-

derers into the way of life, to raise up the fallen, to convince the gainsayers, and, lastly, to drive away the wolves from the sheepfold of the Lord ; also, prudently and seriously to reprove sins, and to warn the wicked, and not to connive or keep silence at the commission of sin ; and they are also to administer the sacraments, and to commend the just use of them, and by wholesome doctrine to prepare all to the right participation of the same ; and to preserve the faithful also in holy unity, and to hinder schisms ; finally, to catechise the ignorant, and to commend the necessity of the poor to the Church ; to visit the sick, and those oppressed and perplexed with various temptations, and to instruct them and to retain them in the way of life ; moreover, they are so to arrange, that there shall be public prayers, exhortations, and supplications, in time of need, together with fasting, that is, holy abstinence ; and most diligently to take care that all things are done which appertain to the tranquillity, peace, and salvation of the Church. But that the minister may the more rightly, and with the greater facility, perform all these things, it is required of him, in the first place, that he should always be in the fear of God, that he should pray diligently and constantly, that he should carefully apply himself to holy reading, and that he should watch in all things, always and everywhere, and that by purity of life he should shine before all. And likewise, it is needful that there should be discipline in the Church ; and formerly, amongst the ancients, excommunication was adopted, and there were ecclesiastical courts amongst the people of God, in which this discipline was exercised by prudent and pious men ; also, this discipline was so managed, that it tended to the edification of the ministers and of the people, and it was adapted to the condition of the times, and to the state and to the necessity of the public. And here that rule is always to be observed—"That all things ought to be done to edification, decently, honestly, and

uprightly, without tyranny and strife." For the apostle testifieth, in 2 Cor. x., that the power delivered by God to him in the Church was unto edification, and not to destruction. For the Lord himself hath forbidden that even the tares should be rooted up out of the Master's field, seeing there is a danger lest also the wheat should be pulled up, (Matt. xiii.)

11. Moreover, we reject in the present day the error of the Donatists, who reckoned that the doctrine, and the administration of the sacraments, were either efficacious or inefficacious, according to the evil or good life of the ministers. For we know that the voice of Christ is to be heard out of the mouth even of unworthy ministers. Seeing the Lord himself hath said, in Matt. xxiii., "Whatsoever they command you do, but do not ye after their works." We know that the sacraments, from their very institution, are sanctified and made efficacious to the pious through the word of Christ, although they may be administered by unworthy ministers, concerning which things Augustine, that blessed servant of God, with many arguments from the Scriptures, disputed against the Donatists. But yet, in the meantime, righteous discipline is to be exercised amongst ministers; for diligent inquiry is to be made in synods into the doctrine and life of ministers. Offenders are to be rebuked by the elders, and brought back into the right way, if they can be reclaimed, and healed, and made right; or they are to be deposed and driven away from the flock of the Lord, if they are incorrigible. For if they are false teachers, they are by no means to be suffered. Nor do we indeed disapprove of the determinations, decisions, and judgments of general councils, if they are solemnly performed according to the apostolical example, unto the salvation of the Church, and not to its destruction.

12. Also, all faithful ministers, as they are good workmen, are worthy of their reward, nor do they sin when they receive their stipend, and, in the meantime, all things necessary for themselves and their families. For the apostle shews by a just law, that these things are to be given by the Church, and to be received by the ministers, in 1 Cor. ix. and in 1 Tim. v., and in other places also. And those who condemn the ministers living by their ministry, and who revile them by their defamations, are confuted by the apostolical doctrine.

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XIX. *Concerning the Sacraments of the Church of Christ.*

1. To the preaching of His Word, in His Church, God hath moreover from the beginning adjoined sacraments or sacramental seals. For so the whole Scripture clearly testifieth. But sacraments are mystical symbols, or holy rites, or sacred actions, instituted by God himself, performing by His power the things signified by the signs, by which His infinite benefits to man are exhibited in the Church, and by which He retaineth us in the memory of the same, and also reneweth us, by which also He seals to us the promises, and by which He himself performs that in us internally which He represents to us externally, and, as it were, brings them before our eyes to be meditated upon, and so strengthens, and increases, and confirms our faith, by the Spirit of God working in our hearts; by which, finally, He separateth us from all other people and religions, and consecrates and obligates us to Himself alone, and signifies to us what He requires from us.

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2. And truly there were some sacraments given to the ancient people, and other sacraments are given to the new people. The sacraments of the ancient people were, circum-

cision and the Paschal Lamb which was sacrificed : by which name Christ is referred to in all the sacrifices which have been celebrated from the beginning of the world. The sacraments of the new people are baptism and the Lord's supper. There are those which enumerate seven sacraments to the new people. Of which we acknowledge that repentance, and ordination of ministers,—not that, indeed, which is papistical, but apostolic,—and marriage, to be profitable institutions of God, but not sacraments. Confirmation and extreme unction are the inventions of men, which the Church may be freed from, without any loss. Neither do we have these things in our Churches. But some have these things, which we by no means approve of. For we altogether abhor all that buying and selling which the Romish priests exercise in the dispensation of the sacraments. For the author of all the sacraments was not any man, but God alone. For men cannot institute sacraments ; for they appertain unto the worship of God. But it is not in the power of men to institute and to form the worship of God ; but it has been delivered to us by God, to receive and to guard. Moreover, the signs have the promises adjoined to them which require faith. But faith resteth upon the sole Word of God. And the Word of God is held fast, and it containeth the will and decrees of God, but the sacraments are, as it were, the seals, which God alone has added to His Word. And as God alone is the author of the sacraments, so He always worketh in the Church in which the sacraments are rightly administered ; so that the faithful, when they receive the sacraments from the ministers, perceive and know that God worketh in His institution, and that on that account they receive the sacraments from the hands of God himself, and that the vice of the minister (if there be anything wrong in him) does not deprive them of the benefit, seeing they know and acknowledge that the truth of the sacraments depends upon the institution of



the Lord. Whence also the faithful do clearly distinguish between the Lord himself, and the servant of the Lord, believing that the benefits themselves of the sacraments are given to them by the Lord himself, but the signs by the ministers of the Lord.

3. Moreover, that supreme benefit which in all the sacraments is set forth to us by God, and diligently attended to and considered by all the pious of all times, (which some call the substance and materiality of the sacraments,) is Christ the Saviour, that only sacrifice, who is the Lamb of God, slain even from the foundation of the world, also that Rock, of which all our fathers drank, through whom all the elect are circumcised without hands by the Holy Ghost, and are washed from all their sins, and are nourished by the veritable body and blood of Christ unto life eternal.

4. And so far indeed as it respects that supreme and infinite blessing, which is implied and set forth to us by God in the sacraments, the sacraments of both people are alike; for Christ, the only Mediator and Saviour of the faithful, is that divine and supreme blessing to both people alike, inasmuch as He is the veritable benefit and the thing itself signified, and the essential glory of the sacraments. One and the same God is the author of both these to both people. They have been given to both people as signs, and also seals of the grace and promises of God, which bring into remembrance, and renew those infinite benefits of God, by which also the faithful are separated from all other religions of the globe, and lastly, they are spiritually begotten through faith, and perceiving that they are united to the Church, they admonish themselves of their own duty. In these, I say, and in such like things as these, the sacraments of both people

differ not, (that is to say, in respect to the benefits,) which, nevertheless, in signs are different.

5. And verily, with regard to these signs, we have also established a more ample difference. For our signs are firmer and more durable, seeing they are those which shall never be changed, even unto the end of the world. But they testify also, that the blessing and the promise have been fulfilled and completed in Christ, which the other sacraments signified should be fulfilled in Him; also, our sacraments are more simple, and less laborious, and less sumptuous, and with ceremonies not so intricate. Furthermore, they belong to a more extensive people, dispersed throughout the whole of this terrestrial globe; and seeing also that they are more illustrious, (through the Holy Ghost,) they excite a greater faith, and consequently a more abundant effusion of the Spirit is given.

6. Certainly, when Christ the true Messiah was manifested to us, and abundance of grace was poured out upon the people of the New Testament, the sacraments of the ancient people were really abrogated, and therefore ceased; and the symbols or sacraments of the New Testament were substituted: in the place of circumcision, baptism; and in the place of the Paschal Lamb and of sacrifices, the Lord's Supper.

7. But, as formerly, the sacraments consisted of word, sign, and thing signified, so now also they are as it were divided into the same parts. For, by the Word of God they become sacraments, which before they were not. For they are consecrated by the Word, and are demonstrated to be sanctified by Him who instituted them. And to sanctify, or to consecrate, is to dedicate anything to God and to sacred uses, that

is, to separate it from a common or a profane use, and to set it apart to a sacred use. For the signs in the sacraments being taken from their common use, are external and visible things. For the sign in baptism is the element of water, and that is visible ablution or sprinkling, which is done by the minister. But the thing signified is regeneration, or the washing from sins. The sign in the Supper of the Lord is bread and wine, taken from its common use as food and drink. But the thing signified is the veritable body of the Lord delivered for us, and His most precious blood shed for us, or the communion of the body and blood of the Lord. Wherefore also we say, that the sacraments, according to their divine institution and holy use, are only what they are called, namely, water, bread and wine, in their own nature. Moreover, if the Word of God is added with prayer to the blessed Trinity, and with the renewing of its first institution and sanctification, those signs are consecrated and are demonstrated by Christ to be sanctified. For the first institution and consecration of the sacraments of Christ doth always remain efficacious in the Church of God, so that they who do not celebrate the sacraments otherwise than as the Lord himself has ordained from the beginning, even now also enjoy all those most excellent benefits of all, set forth by the Lord in its first consecration. And on this account the veritable words of Christ are set forth in the celebration of the sacraments. And because we learn in the Word of God, that these signs were instituted by the Lord, for another end than that which is generally mentioned ; on this account, we teach that the signs now in sacred use often take the names of the things signified, nor are they any more to be called water, bread and wine, but also regeneration, or the washing of regeneration, also the body and blood of the Lord, or the signs or sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord. Not that the signs are changed into the things signified, and cease to

be that which they are in their own nature ; for in that case they would not be sacraments, which only represent the things signified ; neither would they be signs : but on this account the signs often take the names of the things signified, because they are mystical symbols of sacred things, and the signs and the things signified are sacramentally conjoined together between themselves, conjoined, I say, or united through the mystical signification, according to His will and counsel, who ordained the sacraments. For the water, and the bread and wine, are not common signs, but sacred. And He who instituted the water of baptism, according to His own will and counsel, did not institute it that the faithful should be merely sprinkled with the water of baptism only, and He who commanded us to eat bread and drink wine in the Supper of the Lord, did not will this, that the faithful should receive bread and wine only, without the mystery, as men eat bread, each in his own house, but that also they should spiritually communicate in the things signified, and be truly washed from all their sins through faith, and be made partakers of Christ.

8. Therefore we by no means approve of those who attribute the sanctification of the sacrament to I know not what forms and recitations, or power of words pronounced by the consecrator, and who hath the intention of consecrating, or to other adventitious circumstances, which were neither delivered to us either by the word or by the example of Christ, or of His apostles. Neither do we approve of the doctrine of those also, who so speak, concerning the sacraments, as if they were common signs, and not sanctified or efficacious. Nor do we approve of those who, on account of the invisible, despise the visible things in the sacraments, and so believe that with regard to themselves, the signs would be superfluous, because they imagine that they themselves now

enjoy the things signified, like as the Messalians are said to have done. Neither verily do we approve of the doctrine of those also, who teach that grace and the things signified are so bound up together and included in the signs, that whosoever do partake of the external signs, are also partakers of grace internally and of the things signified, be they what they may.

9. In the meantime, like as we do not reckon that the verity of the sacraments depends upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the ministers, so neither upon any merit or worthiness as a condition in the receivers. For we acknowledge that the integrity and blessings of the sacraments depends upon the faithfulness, and truth, and sole goodness of God. For as the Word of God remaineth the veritable Word of God, whereby not only the genuine words are recited, whilst it is preached; but, at the same time, the things signified or announced in those words are offered by God, although the impious and unbelievers hear, and in some way understand the words, yet they do not enjoy the things signified; on this account, because they do not receive it with true faith: so the sacraments consisting of words, signs, and things signified, do remain true, and entire sacraments, not only signifying the sacred things, but also by God offering the things signified, although unbelievers do not receive the things offered. This culpability is not of God, who giveth and offereth, but the fault is in men receiving them without faith and profanely: whose "unbelief doth not make the faith of God without effect," (Rom. iii.)

10. Moreover, seeing that it has been explained what the sacraments were from the beginning, when presently it is explained exactly, and particularly why they were instituted, it is not that they should be repeated with tediousness hav-



ing been once spoken of. Therefore we shall now speak particularly concerning the sacraments of the new people.

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## XX. *Concerning Holy Baptism.*

1. Baptism was instituted and consecrated by God, and John first baptized, who baptized Christ with water in Jordan. Hence it descended to the apostles, who also themselves baptized with water. The Lord clearly and expressly commanded His apostles to preach the gospel, and to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xxviii.) And Peter in Acts, to the Jews, asking him what they ought to do, said, "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Hence baptism has been called by some the initial sign of the people of God, inasmuch as thereby they are initiated, or admitted to God, as the elect of God.

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2. There is only one baptism in the Church of God, and it is sufficient to be baptized once, or initiated to God. And baptism being once undergone, endureth throughout the whole of our life, and is the perpetual seal of our adoption. Because to be baptized in the name of Christ, is to be enrolled, initiated, and received into the covenant, and into the family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God; yea, they are now called by the name of God—that is, a son, or a child of God, also they are cleansed from all the filthiness of their sins, and the manifold grace of God is given to them, to the end that they might live a new and innocent life. Therefore baptism retains us in the memory of, and renews this great benefit of God, performed towards the race of mortals. For we are all born in the uncleannesses of our sins, and by nature we are children of wrath. But God who is

rich in mercy graciously cleanses us from sins, through the blood of His Son, and through Him adopts us for His children, and so unites us to Himself in the holy covenant, and enriches us with various gifts, that we might live a new life. All these things are sealed to us in baptism. For we are internally regenerated, purified, and renewed by God, through the Holy Ghost. But we publicly receive the seal of these infinite blessings by water, whereby all these His supreme benefits are represented, and, as it were, placed before our eyes to be beheld and considered. And on this account we are baptized—that is, we are washed or sprinkled with visible water. For water washes away dirt, and comforts and refreshes the fainting and the scorching bodies of men. But the grace of God performs these things upon the souls of men, and indeed invisibly and spiritually.

3. Also by the sign of baptism, God separates us from all strange religions and people, and consecrates us to Himself as His flock: therefore, whilst we are baptized, we confess our faith, and we are bound unto obedience to God, and to the mortification of the flesh, and to newness of life, and so we are enrolled into the holy army of Christ, that during the whole course of our life, we might fight against the world and Satan, and against our own flesh. Likewise we are baptized into the one body of the Church, that with all the members of the Church we might truly, and sweetly, and harmoniously, and unanimously agree in the same religion and in the mutual offices of love.

4. We believe that to be the most perfect form of baptism, wherewith Christ himself baptized, and wherewith His apostles baptized. Therefore whatever things, by later human inventions, have afterwards been added to it, and obtruded upon the Church, we do not judge to be necessary

unto the perfection or right performance of baptism: of which sort is exorcism, also the use of a burning light, oil, salt, spittle, and such like things, as that baptism every year should be consecrated twice with more ceremonies. For we believe that the one baptism of the Church was sanctified in the first institution of God, and consecrated through the word, and that now also it is efficacious on account of the first benediction and blessing of God.

5. We teach that baptism ought not to be administered in the Church by women or by midwives. For Paul hath forbidden that women should hold ecclesiastical offices. But baptism appertaineth to ecclesiastical offices. We reject the doctrine of the Anabaptists, who deny that infants recently born of the faithful ought to be baptized. For, according to the evangelical doctrine, the kingdom of God is theirs, and they are in the covenant of God. Why therefore should not the sign of the covenant of God be given to them? Why should not they be admitted into the Church of Christ, by holy baptism, who are the flock and in the Church of God?

Note—If we carefully read the Word of God, I think we shall find that both infant baptism and also the baptism of persons of riper years are in accordance with Scripture. And first, with regard to baptism itself, the Scripture nowhere asserts that baptism with water is regeneration, neither doth the Scripture declare that all those who are baptized with water are regenerated. And now with regard to infant baptism, forasmuch as the Scripture testifieth that when John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins," (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) Now, may it not be reasonably supposed that some of those whom John baptized were little children? and it is said of the jailer at Philippi,

that both he and his household were baptized," (Acts xvi. 33,) and St Paul saith, "I baptized also the household of Stephanas," (1 Cor. i. 15.) Milner, in his Ecclesiastical History, states that very early in the third century, there was a council held of sixty pastors to consider the case of infant baptism: all of whom were unanimous in the belief that infant baptism was according to the will of God. There is a work written by the Rev. Francis Ellaby, entitled, "The Church of the Lord: wherein is considered the general standing of a church in ordinances: the sacrament of baptism more especially: the believer's completeness in Christ in the sight of God: and the Holy Spirit, or third person of the blessed Trinity,—His offices and love." This work I would recommend to Christians generally, and I am inclined to think that to them it would be acceptable and edifying.

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### XXI. *Concerning the Holy Supper of the Lord.*

1. The Supper of the Lord, which is also called the Table of the Lord and the Eucharist,—that is, thanksgiving, or a grateful commemoration of benefits,—is on this account generally called the Supper, because it was instituted by Christ in that His last supper; and it still represents it, and in it the faithful do eat and drink spiritually. For the author of the Lord's Supper is not an angel, or any man, but our Lord Jesus Christ himself the Son of God, who first consecrated it for His Church. And that very consecration and benediction still stands firm and good towards all those who celebrate no other supper, but that only which the Lord has instituted, in which they repeat the very words which were spoken by the Lord of the Supper, and in all things do behold, and by true faith have regard unto, one Christ, from whose hands they, as it were, receive that which they do receive through the ministry of the ministers of the Church

The Lord, in this rite, willeth that we should retain fresh in our memory the very greatest benefit and blessing ever imparted to the race of mortals—namely, because by His own body which was delivered for us, and by His own blood which was shed for us, He hath forgiven to us all trespasses and sins, and hath redeemed us from eternal death and from the power of the devil; and now He feedeth us with His own flesh, and giveth us His own blood to drink; which, being spiritually received by true faith, do nourish us unto life eternal. And this so great a benefit is as often renewed whensoever the Supper of the Lord is celebrated: for the Lord hath said, “This do in remembrance of me.” In this sacred Supper it is likewise sealed to us that the body of the Lord was truly delivered for us, and that His blood was shed for the remission of our sins, lest by any means our faith should languish or fail. And truly this is visibly represented publicly in the sacrament by the minister, and, as it were, set forth before our eyes, that we might consider that which Christ himself worketh invisibly in us internally, through the Holy Ghost himself. The bread is publicly given by the minister, and the words of the Lord are heard—“Take, eat: this is my body; take it, and divide it amongst yourselves; all ye drink of this, this is my blood.” Therefore the faithful take that which is given to them by the servant of the Lord, and they eat the bread of the Lord, and they drink the cup of the Lord. In the meantime, by the work of Christ internally through the Holy Ghost, they also discern the flesh and the blood of the Lord, and do feed on these unto life eternal. For the flesh of Christ is meat indeed, and the blood of Christ is drink indeed, unto life eternal; and Christ himself, forasmuch as He was delivered to death, even the death of the cross, for us, and is our Saviour, is that supreme and infinite blessing of this Supper; nor do we suffer anything else to be substituted in the place of Him.

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2. But in order that it might be the more rightly and clearly understood how the flesh and blood of Christ are the meat and drink of the faithful, and how they are received by the faithful unto life eternal, we shall add these few words:—The eating is not of one sort only. For there is the corporeal eating, whereby food is taken by man through the mouth, and goes into the stomach. Of this sort of eating the Capernaites formerly understood within themselves that the flesh of the Lord was to be eaten; but they were confuted by the Lord himself, in John, chap. vi. For as the flesh of Christ could not be corporeally eaten, without great wickedness and cruelty, so it is not meat for stomachs, because all men are compelled to acknowledge this. Therefore we reject that canon in the decrees of the Popes, which asserteth that the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the body and blood, and soul and divinity of Christ. For neither did pious antiquity, neither do we believe that the body of Christ can either be corporeally or essentially eaten with the mouth of the body.

3. But there is a spiritual eating of the body of Christ; not that, indeed, whereby we may think that the food itself is turned into spirit, but whereby these things are spiritually communicated to us, the body and blood of the Lord remaining in their own essence and nature. We receive them verily, only, not corporeally, but spiritually, through the Holy Ghost, who truly applies and gives to us those things which were procured for us through the flesh and blood of the Lord, who was delivered to death for us, by the which, I say, we have remission of sins, freedom and deliverance, and eternal life; so that Christ liveth in us, and we live in Him; and He himself also worketh that in us whereby we perceive by true faith that He is our spiritual meat and our spiritual drink—that is, that He is our life. For as corporeal meat

and drink do not only refresh and strengthen our bodies, but also preserve them in life, even so the flesh of Christ, who was delivered for us, and His blood, which was shed for us, do not only refresh and strengthen our souls, but do also preserve them in life ; not, indeed, inasmuch as they are corporeally eaten and drank, but inasmuch as they are spiritually communicated to us by the Spirit of God, the Lord saying, "And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world ;" also, "The flesh (that is, corporeally eaten) profiteth nothing ; it is the spirit that quickeneth. And the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life." And likeas it is needful that we ourselves should receive food by eating, in order that it might nourish us and produce its beneficial effects upon us, seeing that if food be placed before us and we do not partake of it it profiteth us nothing, even so it is absolutely necessary that we should receive Christ by faith, in order that He might be made ours, and live in us and we in Him. For He saith, "I am the bread of life ; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Also, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me, and dwell in me, and I in him." By all which scriptures it is quite clear that by spiritual meat we are by no means to understand, I know not what imaginary meat, but the veritable body of the Lord, delivered for us, which, nevertheless, is received by the faithful not corporeally, but spiritually through faith ; in which sacrament we follow in all things the doctrines of the Saviour himself Christ the Lord, as it is written in John vi. And this eating of the flesh, and this drinking of the blood of the Lord, is so necessary unto salvation, that without this no man can be saved. But this spiritual eating and spiritual drinking is also done at the Supper of the Lord, and as often and whensoever a man believeth in Christ,—to which that saying of Augustine is

applicable—"Why preparest thou the tooth and the stomach? Believe, and thou hast eaten."

4. Moreover, also, the sacramental eating of the body of the Lord is a superior spiritual eating, whereby the faithful man not only spiritually and inwardly partakes of the veritable body and blood of the Lord, but also by publicly approaching unto the Table of the Lord he receives the visible sacrament of the body and of the blood of the Lord. Before, indeed whilst, the faithful man believed, he received spiritual nourishment, and still he enjoys it in himself; but on this account he receiveth some blessing, whilst he now also receiveth the sacrament. For in the continuation of the communication of the body and blood of the Lord, he goes forward and advances, and so burns with love more and more, and faith groweth and increaseth, and he is animated and strengthened and revived by spiritual nourishment. For whilst we live faith hath its continual increases; and he who with true faith publicly receiveth the sacrament, that very same person not only receiveth the sign, but, as we have said, he enjoys also that veritable, supreme, and infinite blessing. Besides, that very same person is obedient to the institution and commandment of the Lord, and, with a joyful mind and glad heart, gives thanks for his own redemption, and for the redemption of the whole human race, and declares his faithful remembrance of the Lord's death, and testifies before the Church that he is a member of His body. Also, it is sealed to those receiving the sacrament that the body of the Lord was not only delivered, and His blood shed for men in general, but peculiarly for every faithful communicant, to be his meat and drink unto eternal life.

5. Moreover, he who with no faith approaches unto this sacred table of the Lord, communicateth only in the sacra-

ment, but he does not receive the blessing of the sacrament, which is life and salvation. And such do profanely eat at the table of the Lord. But they who eat of this bread, and drink of this cup of the Lord unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and do eat and drink unto their own condemnation. For when they do not come with true faith, they treat with affront and contempt the death of Christ, and on this account they eat and drink damnation unto themselves. Therefore we do not so conjoin the body and blood of the Lord with the bread and wine, as that we should say, that the bread itself is the body of Christ, unless by sacramental means; neither do we say that the body of Christ lies hid corporeally under the bread; neither do we say that the Lord is to be adored under the form of bread; neither do we say that whosoever receiveth the sign, receiveth also the thing itself signified—that is, the infinite and supreme blessing. The body of Christ is in the heavens, on the right hand of the Father. Thither our hearts are to be raised, and not to be fixed on the bread, nor is the Lord to be adored in the bread. And yet the Lord is not absent from His Church celebrating His Supper. The sun being absent from us in heaven, is nevertheless efficaciously present with us; how much more shall Christ the Sun of righteousness, although His body is absent from us in heaven, be present with us, not indeed corporeally, but spiritually by His enlivening and vivifying operation, even as He himself, in the last Supper, explained that He himself would be present with us, (John xiv., xv., xvi.) Hence it follows that we do not receive the Supper without Christ, in the meantime, nevertheless, we have the unbloody and mystical Supper, even as universal antiquity hath often declared.

6. Moreover, we are admonished in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that we should be mindful that we are

made partakers of His body, and that, on this account, we should live peaceably and harmoniously with all our brethren, and that we should live holily, and not pollute ourselves with scandalous crimes and with strange religions ; but persevering in the true faith, even unto the end of life, we should study to advance and grow in holiness of life. Therefore it is very meet and right, that when we are about to approach unto this Supper, that we should first prove and examine ourselves according to the commandment of the apostle ; in the first place, whether we be such as are endued with true faith ; whether we believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and to call men to repentance, and whether we have obeyed the call unto repentance, and whether each one believeth that he is in the number of those which have been made free, and saved by Christ, and whether he has determined to change his wicked life, and to live holily, and to persevere by the help of the Lord in the true religion, and in concord with his brethren, and whether he gives sincere thanks to God for his deliverance, &c. We esteem that rite, mode, or form of the Supper, to be the most pure and the most excellent, which comes nearest unto the first institution of the Lord's, and unto the apostolical doctrine—namely, that which consisteth in the annunciation of the Word of God, in devout prayers, in the Lord's own action, and in the repeating of His own words, in the eating of the body, and in the drinking of the blood of the Lord, in the sincere and grateful remembrance of the Lord's death, and in faithful thanksgiving, in union also with the holy consociation of the ecclesiastical body. Therefore we disapprove of those who have taken away from the faithful, one part of the sacrament, the cup, I say, of the Lord. For these do grievously sin against the institution of the Lord, saying, All ye, drink of this ; that which He hath not so expressly said concerning the bread.

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7. Whether the mass that has been formerly used amongst the ancients was tolerable or intolerable, we do not now dispute ; but this we freely say, that the mass which is this day in use throughout the whole Romish Church, for very many, and indeed for most just causes, is abolished in our churches, which, for brevity's sake, we do not now mention. Certainly we do not approve that of this salutary institution a vain show should be made, which at the same time is said to be meritorious, and also celebrated for money, and because in it the priest is said to make the very body of the Lord, and really to offer it for the remission of the sins, both of the living and of the dead, encouraging also adoration to the honour, and renown, and memory of the saints in the heavens, &c.

#### XXII. *Concerning Sacred and Ecclesiastical Assemblies.*

1. Although it is lawful and right for all men privately to read the sacred Scriptures, and mutually to edify each other by instruction in the true religion, yet in order that the Word of God might be lawfully preached to the people, and that prayers and supplications might be made publicly, also that the sacraments might be scripturally celebrated, and a collection made for the poor of the Church, and the necessary expenses introduced before the Church, and the services of the Church upheld, it is altogether needful, that there should be sacred meetings, and ecclesiastical assemblies of the faithful;—for this is in agreement with the Apostolical Church ; and the primitive assemblies of this sort were frequently attended by all the pious. As many as despise these meetings, and separate themselves from them, do despise the true religion, and they are to be admonished by the pastors, and by pious magistrates, that they ought not to separate themselves so obstinately, and continue to disregard the sacred assemblies. But ecclesiastical assemblies are not

to be secret and seldom, but public and frequent, unless the persecution of the enemies of Christ and of the Church does not permit them to be public. For we know that formerly there were such assemblies of the primitive Church, held in secret places, on account of the tyranny of the Roman emperors. But now there are honourable places, and comfortable in every respect, in which the faithful of the Church of God assemble together. Therefore spacious edifices or temples are built. Nevertheless they are free from all those things which are not becoming to the Church. But they are built in all things for decorum, necessity, and pious honour; nor is anything wanting which is required for the rites and necessary uses of the Church. But as we believe that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, so also we know, by the Word of God, and by sacred customs, that places dedicated to God and to His worship, are not common or unhallowed, but sacred; and those who are engaged or employed in them ought to behave themselves reverently, humbly, and devoutly, inasmuch as they are in a sacred place, in the presence of God and of His holy angels. Therefore all superfluities and extravagance of dress, and all pride, and all things inconsistent with humility, good order, and Christian modesty, are to be utterly rejected, and put far away from the edifices and temples of Christians. But the veritable and true ornaments of temples consisteth not in ivory, gold, and gems, or precious stones, but in the temperance, piety, faith, and virtues of those who are engaged in the temple. And all things should be done decently and in order in the Church; finally, all things should be done unto edification. Therefore all strange tongues should keep silence in sacred assemblies. And all things should be set forth and declared in the common language, and that which is understood by all men in the assembly.

XXIII. *Concerning the Prayers of the Church, Singing, and Canonical Hours.*

1. It is verily lawful for any man to pray privately in any language which he understands ; but public prayers in sacred assemblies ought to be made in the vulgar tongue, or in that language which is known by all. Every prayer of the faithful is to be offered to God alone, through the sole mediation of Christ, in faith and love. The priesthood of Christ the Lord, and the true religion, forbid us to pray to celestial saints, or to apply to these as intercessors. And we are to pray for the magistrate, for kings, and for all that are in authority ; for the ministers of the Church, and for all the necessities of the churches. But in calamities, and especially of the Church, prayer—public and private—is to be made without ceasing. Also, prayer is to be spontaneous, and the language and the desire of the heart,—not by constraint, nor for any money. Neither is it becoming that prayer should be so superstitiously limited to a particular place, as that it should be reckoned unlawful to pray anywhere else but in the temple. Neither is it absolutely necessary that public prayers, as to the form and time, should be exactly alike in all the churches. For the churches may, if they please, use this liberty. Socrates, in his history, says, “In all countries universally you cannot find two churches which fully agree in praying. I think that those who presided over particular churches, each in their times were themselves the authors of this difference. If, nevertheless, they can agree, that is very greatly to be commended, and it ought to be imitated by others.”

2. But also it is becoming that in public prayers there should be a certain limit fixed, lest they should be too long and tedious. Therefore, in sacred assemblies, the more eligible parts of the evangelical doctrine should first be read, and care taken lest the people in the assembly should be

wearied by too long prayers, so that when the preaching of the gospel is to be heard, the people being tired might wish to depart from the assembly, or be released to go after their worldly affairs. By such things taking place in the congregation, that appears too long which otherwise, and in itself, is sufficiently succinct, brief, and well ordered. For it becometh the preachers also to preserve this rule. So also the singing, where it is in use, is to be moderated. The singing, which some call the Gregorian, hath very many absurdities; hence it is deservedly rejected by our churches and by many more. If there are churches which have the faithful and lawful Word, but have no singing, they are not to be condemned, for all churches have not the convenience of singing; but it is certain, according to the testimonies of antiquity, that singing was in use from very ancient times in the Oriental churches; also, that at length, late in the evening, it was admitted and received in the Western churches.

3. As it respects canonical hours—that is, prayers composed for certain hours of the day, and sung or recited by Papists—antiquity knew nothing of, as that can be demonstrated by the very choice of the hours, and by many more arguments. But they have so many absurdities, that I shall say no more but that they have been rightly laid aside by the churches, substituting in their place things salutary to all the Church of God.

Note—Although the faithful may differ in respect of the form of words in which they address God through Jesus Christ, who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, and consecrated with an oath, yet the language and the desire of the heart of every regenerate man, of every true believer, is alike towards God, because God hath said, “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me

for ever." And the Holy Ghost saith, "He fashioneth their hearts alike," (Ps. xxxiii. 15.) But still it must be acknowledged that some of the children of God, who have had to wade through very deep waters, and long and sore temptations, may have sins to lament and to bemoan before God, which others perhaps of God's children have not; for it is to be believed that, while all true Christians must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, yet some Christians, for wise purposes, may have deeper sorrows to wade through than others. But still it remains true that all that believe are of one heart; and although they are the children of God, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, all have need to pray with David, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," (Ps. cxliii. 2.) And albeit there be many sects, yet there is but one Church of the living God, one body of which Christ himself is the Head; and this Church, or body of Christ, is composed of all those who truly believe in Christ—who are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John i. 13.) It is right that we should have certain hours for prayer to God, but at no time ought we to pray to saints.

#### XXIV. *Concerning Feasts, Fasts, and the choice of Meats.*

1. Although religion is not bound to time, nevertheless it cannot be planted or exercised without a just distinction, or appointment and ordination of time. Therefore every church appointeth for themselves a certain time for public prayers and for the preaching of the gospel, and also for the celebration of the sacraments. And it is not lawful for any one of his own will to unsettle or to disannul this ordination of the church. For unless a just leisure is granted to the external exercise of religion, men are certainly drawn away from it by their secular businesses. Hence we see that in the an-



cient churches, not only that there were certain hours in the week appointed for sacred assemblies, but that in the times of the apostles, the Lord's-day was consecrated by them, for sacred leisure or rest, and the worship of God, which also is now rightly guarded by our churches for the sake of divine worship and charity. To the Jewish observation and superstitions we here ascribe nothing. For neither do we believe that one day is holier than another day; neither do we believe that, by rest of itself, we can approve ourselves unto God; but by a free and willing observation we celebrate the Lord's-day, but not the Jewish sabbath.

2. Furthermore, if the churches, according to Christian liberty, do religiously celebrate the remembrance of our Lord's nativity, circumcision, sufferings, and resurrection, also His ascension into heaven, and the sending down of the Holy Ghost upon His disciples, we do very greatly approve of this. But feasts instituted by men in honour of saints we do not approve of. And, truly, feasts appertained to the ceremonial law, and they were of God's own appointment. Lastly, the feasts which have been instituted in honour of saints are abrogated by us, inasmuch as they are absurd, unprofitable, and very many, and by no means to be tolerated. In the meantime we confess that the memory of the saints is not unprofitable, but to be commended in its place and time in sacred assemblies to the people, and the holy examples of the saints set forth to be imitated and followed by all.

3. And inasmuch as the Church of Christ heavily condemns gluttony, drunkenness, and all lust and intemperance, so also does it fervently recommend to us Christian fasting. For fasting is nothing else but the abstinence and temperance of the pious, also discipline, watchfulness, and the chas-

tisement of our flesh, performed by us on account of the present necessity, whereby we humble ourselves before God, and subdue the carnal desires of the flesh, by which means we may the easier and the more freely obey the Spirit. Therefore they do not fast who have no other motive or reason for it, but believe that, if they feed the body only once in a day, they fast; and that if they abstain for a certain or a prescribed time from particular meats, do think, this work being performed, that they please God, and that they do a good work. But true fasting is a helper of the prayer of the saints and of all virtues. The fast whereby the Jews abstained from meats, but not from their wickednesses, (as may be seen in the books of the prophets,) was not pleasing to God.

4. But there is also public fasting and private fasting. Formerly, public fasts were appointed in calamitous times, and in the afflicted states of the Church. They abstained altogether from food, even until the evening; and they devoted all this time to sacred prayers, to the worship of God, and to repentance. And these fasts were attended with grief and sorrow and lamentation; and frequent mention of these things is made in the prophets, particularly by Joel, in the second chapter. A fast of this sort also ought to be observed and kept daily in the distressed and adverse circumstances of the Church. Private fasts are undertaken by each one of us, according as every one of us shall judge to be profitable for his soul. For hitherto it has been declared that the desires of the flesh are to be withheld.

5. All fasts ought to be performed with a free and willing mind, and a spirit truly humbled before God, not to be kept to obtain the applause and favour of man, much less on this

account, that a man by them, should vainly wish to merit righteousness. But every man should fast to this end, that he might vanquish the desires of the flesh, and that he might the more fervently serve God.

6. The fast of forty days hath the testimony of antiquity, but none from the apostolical writings; therefore it ought not, neither can it be imposed on the faithful. It is certain that formerly there were various forms or customs of fastings. Hence Irenæus, a very ancient writer, says, "Some think that a fast ought to be observed for only one day, some for two days, but others for more, also some for forty days, which variety of observance hath not begun now at length in our times, but long before us; from those, I suppose, who, holding in another way, not purely, that which was delivered from the beginning, either through negligence or ignorance, differed from the pattern set." But also Socrates the historian says, "Inasmuch as no ancient writing is found concerning this thing, I think that the apostles have left this to the judgment of each, that every man might work that which is good willingly, not out of fear and necessity."

7. But now as it respects the choice of meats, we think, in fastings, that all that is to be withheld from the flesh by which it is rendered more carnal, and in which it is exceedingly delighted, whence the desires of the flesh do arise—whether they are fishes, or flesh, or aromatics, or delicious and superior wines. Otherwise we know that all the creatures of God were made for the use and service of men, (Gen. ii.) All things which God hath made are good, and without choice—that is, not refusing anything wholesome—to be received in the fear of God and a just moderation. For the apostle, in Titus i., says, "To the clean, all things are clean." Also, in 1 Cor. x., "Whatsoever is sold at the

shambles, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake." The same apostle calleth the doctrine of those who commanded to abstain from meats, a doctrine of devils, (1 Tim. iv.) For God hath created meats to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by them who have known the truth, because whatsoever God hath created is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, &c. The same apostle, in Col. ii., reproves those who, by too much abstinence, wished to raise for themselves a name for holiness. We therefore unanimously reject the Tatians and the Eucratites, and all the followers of Eustachius, against whom the Synod of Gangra assembled.

XXV. *Of Catechising, and of the Consolation and Visitation of the Sick.*

1. The Lord gave strict commandment to His ancient people, that they should bestow the greatest care in rightly instructing the youth from their infancy, and also He hath expressly commanded that they should instruct them in His own law, and explain to them the mysteries of the sacraments. And seeing that it is especially evident, according to the evangelical and apostolical writings, that God hath now no less regard and care for the children of His new people, inasmuch as He himself publicly testifieth and saith, in Mark x., "Suffer the little children to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of God." Therefore the pastors of the churches should most prudently, and betimes diligently catechise the youth, laying the first foundations of the faith, and teaching them faithfully the rudiments of our religion, by explaining to them the Ten Commandments of God, also the Creed of the Apostles, likewise the Lord's Prayer; and the meaning and design of the sacraments, with other first principles of the same sort, and the chief points of our religion. But the Church also should exercise all her diligence in

bringing the children unto the Faith, and unto the Catechism, anxiously desiring and rejoicing to instruct their children in the right way.

2. But seeing that men are never exposed to heavier temptations than whilst they are exercised by infirmities, and are sick and distressed with diseases, both of the mind and body, truly it never becometh the pastors of the churches to be more watchful for the salvation of their flock, than in diseases and infirmities of this sort. Therefore they should visit the sick early, also they should be early called for by the sick, and the pastors should, if the case itself requires it, console them, and confirm them in the true faith; lastly, they should strengthen them against the pernicious suggestions of Satan: also, they should institute domestic prayers for the sick person, and, if it is needful, they should pray for the salvation of the sick person in the public assembly; and the utmost care should be taken by the pastors and others, in order that he might depart happily from this world. We have before stated that we do not approve of the Papistic visitation with their own extreme unction, because it hath absurdities, and it is not approved of by the canonical Scripture.

XXVI. *Of the Burial of the Faithful, and of the Care to be taken of the Dead, of Purgatory, and of the Apparition of Spirits.*

1. The bodies of the faithful, as they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and which are rightly believed will rise again in the last day, the Scripture commands us, honourably and without superstition, to commit to the earth, and also it maketh honourable mention of them who have fallen asleep in the Lord; and also orders us to perform all the duties of



piety towards their relatives, as their widows and orphans ; but we do not teach that any other care is requisite to be taken for the dead. Therefore we very greatly disapprove of the Cynics neglecting the bodies of the dead, or most scornfully and most contemptibly casting them into the earth, never saying even one good word concerning the dead, or indeed caring in the least for those they left behind on earth. Again we disapprove, as preposterous, the being too officious towards the dead, of those who, like the heathen, immoderately bewailed their dead : (moderate grief, which the apostle in 1 Thess. iv. allows, we do not blame, judging it quite inhuman not to grieve at all,) but the heathens sacrificed for the dead, and muttered certain short prayers, not without being paid for it ; and by performances of this sort they think, or pretend, that they can liberate those from the torments into which by death they have been plunged, and then again they imagine that they can deliver them by songs and funeral dirges. But we believe, that the faithful go directly from corporeal death unto Christ, and on this account that they do not want the suffrages or prayers of the living for the dead, nor any such-like performances. Also we believe that unbelievers (at death) are immediately cast into hell, by which performances of the living, no door of mercy will ever be opened to any of the impious.

2. But that which certain men teach concerning purgatorial fire is opposed to the Christian faith. "I believe that there is remission of sins, and life eternal." And it is also opposed to the plenary expiation and cleansing through Christ ; and it is contrary to these declarations of Christ the Lord in John v., "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." Also in John xiii., "He that is washed

needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit : and ye are clean."

3. Now that which is taught concerning the spirits or souls of the dead appearing sometimes to the living, and requesting of them services or offices, whereby they might be liberated, we judge these apparitions to be amongst the mockeries, arts, and deceptions of the devil, who, as he can transform himself into an angel of light, so is he very busy in endeavouring either to overturn or to call into doubt the true faith. The Lord, in the Old Testament, forbade that the truth should be inquired of or elicited from the dead, and to have any acquaintance with spirits, in Deut. xviii. But to the rich man consigned to torments, as the evangelical truth relates, a return to his brethren is denied ; in the meantime the Divine oracle pronouncing and saying, "They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," (Luke xvi.)

#### XXVII. *Of Rites and Ceremonies and Means.*

1. To the ancient people formerly, to those who were under the law, certain ceremonies were delivered, as a particular training, whereby they were guarded or kept as it were under a schoolmaster and guardian, but Christ the true Deliverer and Liberator being come, and the ceremonial law being abrogated or taken away, we, who are believers, are no longer under the law, and the ceremonies have disappeared ; which ceremonies the apostles on this account were not willing to retain or renew in the Church of Christ, as they openly testified that they would lay no other burden upon the Church. Therefore, if in the Church of Christ we multiply ceremonies or rites, we seem to return to and to restore

or rebuild Judaism, according to the manner of the ancient Church. And on this account we by no means approve of the judgment of those to whom it appeared right, that the Church of Christ should be bound by many and various rites, so as to be a certain training. For if the apostles were not willing to lay upon Christian people ceremonies or rites divinely delivered, who, I ask, possessed of a sound judgment, would obtrude upon the Church the vain, absurd, and unprofitable devices of men? For the more of human rites that there are accumulated in the Church, the more it is drawn away, not only from Christian liberty, but also from Christ himself, and from faith in Him; whilst the ignorant man seeketh that in rites and ceremonies, which he should seek in the Son of God, Jesus Christ alone, through faith. Therefore to the pious a few moderate and pure rites, and those in unison with the Word of God, are sufficient.

2. But if in churches, different rites are found, no man should think on that account that the churches themselves differ. Socrates says, "It will be impossible that all the rites of the churches which are scattered throughout different states and regions should be exactly alike. No religion guards and observes the same rites in every particular, although they embrace the same doctrine with them. For those who are of the same faith, do yet differ concerning rites or ceremonies amongst themselves." This is what he said. And we to this day have different ceremonies in the celebration of the Lord's supper, and in some other things retained in our churches; nevertheless in doctrine and in faith we differ not, neither is the unity and society of our churches divided by this thing. But the churches, with regard to rites of this sort and means, have always used this liberty. This is also what we do until this day.

3. But, in the meantime we carefully advise that it is requisite to beware, lest those should be reckoned amongst means, as some are accustomed to reckon the mass and the use of images in the temple for means, which in reality are not means. Hieronymus said to Augustine, "That is indifferent which is neither good nor evil, as whether you do it, or whether you do it not, you neither have righteousness nor unrighteousness thereby." Therefore, when men through their own neglect of the Holy Scriptures are drawn away from the confession of the true faith, and brought to believe in the mass, they cease to be free. As St Paul shews that it is lawful to eat meat, if any one does not preadmonish that it was offered in sacrifice to idols, in that case it would be unlawful, because he who partakes of these things, by eating now, seems to approve of idolatry.

XXVIII. *Concerning the Goods of the Church.*

1. The Church of Christ hath riches and wealth through the munificence of princes, and through the liberality of the faithful who have given their riches to the Church. For the Church hath need of wealth, and hath from ancient time possessed riches, to sustain the necessary affairs of the Church. And the true use of the riches of the Church was formerly, and now is, to preserve the doctrine in schools and in sacred assemblies, with the universal worship, rites, and the sacred edifice; finally, to maintain the teachers, disciples, and ministers, with other necessary things, and especially in assisting and maintaining the poor. But men fearing God, prudent, and remarkable for economy should be chosen, who should lawfully distribute ecclesiastical benefits.

2. But if the resources of the Church, through the injury of time, and through the audacity, ignorance, or avarice of

certain persons, are improperly applied, they are to be restored to their sacred use by pious and prudent men. For such misapplication and abuse of them is not to be connived at, for it is very great sacrilege. Therefore we teach that schools and colleges corrupt in doctrine, in worship, and manners are to be reformed and brought into the true faith, and the helping and the care of the poor piously ordered and performed according to the Sacred Word.

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### XXIX. *Of Celibacy, Marriage, and Economy.*

1. They who have the gift of celibacy from Heaven, so that from their whole heart or mind they are pure and continent, neither do grievously burn, may serve the Lord in that vocation as long as they feel that they are endued with that divine gift, and not set themselves up over others, but assiduously and diligently serve the Lord in purity and humility. For these are more ready and apt in caring for, and attending to divine things, than they who are distracted by the private businesses of a family. But if again, the gift being taken away, they shall feel a constant burning, they should be mindful of the apostolic word, "It is better to marry than to burn," (1 Cor. vii. 1.)

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2. For marriage (the remedy for incontinence, and which is continence itself) was instituted by the Lord God himself, who most liberally gave His blessing to it, and inseparably joined the man and the woman together mutually to each other, and He willed that they should live together in the greatest love and concord and harmony, (Matt. xiii.) Of which we know that the apostle hath said, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled," (Heb. xiii.) And again in 1 Cor. vii., "If a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." Therefore we reject polygamy, and those who condemn



second marriages. We teach that marriages are to be lawfully contracted in the fear of the Lord, and not contrary to the laws prohibiting certain degrees in marriage, lest incestuous marriages should be made. They should be contracted with the consent of the parents, or of those who are in the place of the parents, and especially for that end for which the Lord instituted marriages. Finally, they should live together holily, with the greatest mutual fidelity, piety, and love, and also purity. Therefore brawlings, strifes, discords, improper lusts, and adulteries should be avoided and shunned. Lawful courts of justice are appointed in the Church, and holy judges who should defend marriages, and restrain all obscenity and lewdness, and by whom all matrimonial controversies should be settled.

3. Likewise the children should be brought up by their parents in the fear of the Lord; the parents also should provide for their children, being mindful of the apostolic saying in 1 Tim. v., "He that provideth not for his own, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But especially they should teach their children honest arts or trades, whereby they may support themselves and keep from idleness, and in all things endeavour to instil into them true confidence in God, lest by unbelief and carelessness, or presumption, or by filthy avarice, they should degenerate, and bring no fruit unto perfection.

4. And it is most certain that those works which are done by the parents in true faith, by the duties and discipline of marriage, are holy and good works before God, and that these please God no less than prayers, fasting, and alms. For so the apostle hath taught in his Epistles, but especially in those to Timothy and Titus. And with the same apostle we enumerate amongst Satanical doctrines, the doctrine of those

who forbid marriage, who vituperate or reproach it publicly, or indirectly slight it, and speak against it, as if it was not holy or clean. But we execrate unclean celibacy, lusts, and the secret and open fornications, and the pretended continency of hypocrites, seeing they of all others are the most incontinent. All these God will judge. We do not disapprove of riches, nor yet of rich men, if they are pious and use their riches rightly. But we disapprove of that sect which opposes the doctrines of the apostles.

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### XXX. *Concerning the Magistrate.*

1. The magistrate of every country is appointed by God himself for the preservation of the peace and tranquillity of the human race, so that he should possess a principal and an eminent place in the world. If he is an adversary to the Church, he can hinder and disturb the Church very much. But if he is a friend, and so a member of the Church, he is a most useful and a most excellent member of the Church, because he has it in his power to be serviceable to the Church and to help it very seasonably.

2. His principal duty is to preserve the public peace and good order. Because verily he will never be happier than when he truly and religiously fears God—namely, when he, according to the example of the most holy kings and princes of the people of God, promotes the preaching of the truth and of the sincere faith, and roots out lies and all superstition, with all impiety and idolatry, and defends the Church of God. Verily we teach that the care of religion especially belongeth unto the holy magistrate.

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3. Therefore he himself should hold in his hands the Word of God, and should take especial care that nothing is taught contrary to it; also, he should govern the people committed

to him by God, by righteous laws, composed according to the Word of God ; and retain the same by discipline in their duty and obedience. In judging, he should exercise righteous judgments, neither should he respect persons, or accept gifts. He should defend the widows, the orphans, and the afflicted and distressed ; but he should restrain the unjust, the wicked, the deceivers, and the violent, and, if needs be, banish them. For he hath not received the sword from God in vain. Therefore he should exercise this power of God against the seditious, thieves, and murderers, oppressors, blasphemers, and against all those whom God hath ordered him to punish, and even to execute capital punishment. Also, he should restrain heretics, (if they are really heretics, and incorrigible,) and cause that they should desist from blaspheming the majesty of God, and from persecuting the Church of God. But if it is needful also, in order to preserve the safety of the people by war, he must undertake war in the name of the Lord ; but first he must seek peace by all manner of means ; nor must he engage in war, unless it is for the preservation of his people. And whilst the magistrate does these things in faith, by these very works he serveth God righteously, and receives a blessing from the Lord. Therefore we reject the doctrine of those persons who deny that it is lawful for a Christian man to fulfil the duty of a magistrate ; so also that of those who deny that any man, for an offence or crime worthy of death, can be lawfully put to death by the magistrate, or that a magistrate may lawfully wage war, or that oaths should be administered before the magistrate, &c.

4. For as the Lord willeth that the safety of His people should be maintained and preserved through the magistrate, whom He has given to be as it were a father to the world : so all His subjects are commanded to acknowledge this benefit of God in the magistrate. Therefore men should honour and

revere the magistrate as the minister of God ; they should love him, cherish him, and pray for him, as for a father ; they should also be obedient to all his righteous and just commands ; therefore they should pay customs and tribute, and whatsoever things of this sort are due, faithfully and willingly ; and if the public safety or that of the country and justice should require it, and if the magistrate from necessity should undertake war, they should even lay down their lives and shed their blood for the public safety, and for that of the magistrate, and, indeed, in the name of God, willingly, bravely, and cheerfully. For he who sets himself in opposition to the magistrate, kindles against himself the heavy wrath of God.

5. Therefore we reject all the despisers of the magistrate, the rebellious, the enemies of the commonwealth, and seditious knaves ; and, finally, all as many as either publicly or secretly refuse to perform the duties justly required of them.

6. We pray unto God, our most merciful Father in the heavens, to give His divine blessing and saving grace to the princes of the people, also to us, and to all His people, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and our only Saviour ; to whom be praise, and glory, and thanksgiving, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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### REFLECTIONS.

It is believed by pious men, that if all those who profess to believe the gospel would diligently, and humbly, and prayerfully read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Holy Scriptures, that they would in time be perfectly joined to-

gether in the same mind and in the same judgment, (1 Cor. i. 10,) and with one mind and one mouth glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is believed by the regenerate and pious Christians, that the regenerate who have been in Christ many years, are of the same mind now, in all essential things, in relation to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. It is evident that there are certain vital doctrines revealed in the Holy Scriptures, in which all the children of God are unanimously agreed. And first, they are all agreed that the Holy Bible is the revealed Word of God, and that whatsoever is contained in it is true; and they therefore firmly believe all that it containeth; they believe, according to Scripture, that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, (Gen. i. 1,) and all things visible and invisible, according to Scripture; and the regenerate believe that God made man in His own image, righteous and holy, but that man fell from God, and by the disobedience of one, that many were made sinners, and that now all men by nature are sinners and children of wrath, (Eph. ii. 3,) and enemies to God, (Rom. v. 10,) dead in trespasses and sins, (Col. ii. 13.) We believe that God gave to the Israelites the moral law, and also the ceremonial law, but we believe that no man was ever justified by the moral law, (Rom. iii. 19, 20,) but that by it is the knowledge of sin, and that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith, (Gal. iii. 24.) Secondly, we believe that when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. We believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii.) We believe that Christ hath once "suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God," (1 Peter iii. 18.)



and that "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25.) We believe that there is sufficient merit in Christ and in His precious blood to save the world; but the Scripture teacheth us that all the proud and the impenitent, and all the wilfully unbelieving, are not saved, because the eternal merit and unsearchable riches of Christ are given to them only who repent and believe the gospel, (see Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 38.) We believe that the eternal merit and the unsearchable riches of Christ are given to all the members of the Church individually and collectively, which is composed of the regenerate, or of them who have truly repented of their sins and turned to God, and do now unfeignedly believe in Christ, (and not in themselves,) and do now acknowledge that they have in Christ pardon of sins, reconciliation with God, continuance in the favour of God, (Isa. lxiv.; Mal. iii. 6,) all fulness. And the regenerate know that Christ is of God made unto the Church of the first-born, and unto the Church of God of the New Testament, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, (1 Cor. i. 30.) And the regenerate do most firmly believe, and do scripturally know, that no human being, and that not one of Adam's lost race, ever entered heaven by his own merit, but through the sole merit of Christ, given to them who repent, turn to God, and believe in Christ. For Christ deserved and merited forgiveness of sins, and eternal life for lost sinners; and no man was ever saved because he deserved to be saved, but because Jesus Christ came into the world to save lost sinners, and because Christ gives to all humble, penitent, and believing souls forgiveness of sins, unsearchable riches, and eternal life, all which are included in His eternal merit. Also, He imparteth unto the regenerate His own Divine nature, whereby He sanctifieth them. The regenerate believe that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the

Church of the first-born, and all the prophets, such as David, Job, Elijah, Isaiah, and the Virgin Mary, and all the apostles, and St Paul, and the Church of the New Testament, all of whom are regenerated, were all saved by Jesus Christ alone, and by His eternal merit and unsearchable riches which were given to them : and the regenerate believe that if the eternal merit of Christ had not been given to them, that not one of them would have been saved. And the regenerate know of a certainty that with regard to all those who shall be saved from this time, even unto the end of the world, it must and will be only by the eternal merit of Christ being given unto them ; and it has been before declared to whom the unsearchable riches and eternal merit of Christ is given. But it is very true, that in this world the regenerate are rudely treated and mocked, hated and despised, and persecuted by the unregenerate, (Matt. xxiv. 9 ; John xv. 19, xvii. 14 ; Gal. iv. 29.) And Christ himself hath said, in relation to the regenerate, " These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world," (John xvi. 33.) So also St Luke recordeth that Paul and Barnabas, preaching the gospel at Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, said, that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the children of God in this world are chastened by the Lord for their benefit : for David saith, " Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," (Ps. xciv. 12.) And the Scriptures saith, " Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty : for he maketh sore, and bindeth up : he woundeth, and his hands make whole," (Job v. 17, 18.) Also the eternal Spirit saith, " My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of

his correction ; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth," (Prov. iii. 11, 12.) And St Paul saith that " God chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," (Heb. xii. 10, 11.) And the Holy Scriptures teach us that though God correcteth His saints He doth not take His mercy from them ; for the prophet Habakkuk saith, " Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One ? we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment ; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction," (Hab. i. 12.) Also Christ hath said, " I give unto my sheep eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," (John x. 28.) And the same truth is declared by the prophets, and by St Paul in Rom. viii. 33, to the end of the chapter : see also Ezra iii. 13 ; Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24 ; Prov. xxiv. 16 ; John vi. 39, 40, 44-47, 50-54. And for this cause the psalmist exhorteth the redeemed to praise God, saying, " O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy ; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south," (Ps. cvii. 1-3.) Also the prophet Isaiah, speaking in reference to the Church, saith, " The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion ; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head : they shall obtain gladness and joy ; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away," (Isa. li. 11.) And whereas the adversaries of the gospel which resist the truth and teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake, do by their wickedness make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made

sad ; the evangelical prophet declareth, "The Lord shall comfort Zion : he will comfort all her waste places ; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody," (Isa. li. 3.) And whereas the unregenerate do always distress and persecute the regenerate, (Gal. iv. 29 ;) and whereas St Paul saith expressly, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," (2 Tim. iii. 12 ;) the Lord himself doth comfort His Church, saying, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law ; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings," (Isa. li. 7 ;) and in ver. 12, "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." And God, speaking in reference to the regenerate, which is His Church, saith, "This people have I formed for myself ; they shall shew forth my praise," (Isa. xliii. 21.) "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen," (Eph. iii. 20, 21.)





PART III.

THE BELGIAN CONFESSION  
OF FAITH.

[First printed in the French language in the year of our Lord 1561, that it might be demonstrated what was the doctrine of those who in Flanders, Artesia, Hanover, &c., endured the heaviest persecutions and afflictions, as they also did in France in the year 1525. But in the year 1579, being received and confirmed in the Belgian Synod, it was printed in the Belgian language. In the year of our Lord 1581 it was rendered into Latin; and in A.D. 1862 translated into English by OWEN JONES.]



THE  
TRULY CHRISTIAN BELGIAN CONFESSION OF THE  
DIVINE DOCTRINE ;

CONTAINING ALSO

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

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ART. I. We believe with the heart, and we confess with the mouth, that there is one pure and spiritual essence, whom we call God, eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, and supremely wise, who is the exuberant fountain of all blessings, (Eph. iv. 8 ; Deut. vi. 4 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5 ; 2 Cor. viii. 6 ; John iv. 24 ; Isa. xl. 28, and xlv. 6.)

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II. Now we acknowledge God in two ways : first, by creation itself, preservation, and by His government of the whole world. For this world is in our eyes like a very beautiful book, in which all creatures, from the least unto the greatest, do, as it were, to a certain degree, display His attributes and matchless perfections, by which the invisible things of God may be clearly seen and known by us, even His eternal power and Godhead, as the apostle Paul speaketh in Rom.

i. 20 ; which knowledge is sufficient to render men inexcusable everywhere. But again, God has much more clearly and more lucidly revealed Himself to us in His own sacred and divine Word ; so far, indeed, as is conducive in this life to the manifestation of His own glory, and to the salvation of His people, (Ps. xix. ; Eph. iv. 6 ; 2 Cor. iv. 6.)

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III. We confess that this Word of God was not devised or delivered to us by any human will ; but that holy men of God declared it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as St Peter testifieth, (2 Pet. i. 21.) But afterwards, God himself, out of His own immense care and solicitude for His people and for their salvation, gave commandment to His servants, the apostles ; and ordered His prophets that they should commit to writing these His sacred oracles : as also He himself wrote with His own hand the two tables of the law, which is the reason why we call these writings the sacred and divine Scripture.

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IV. Now we embrace the sacred Scripture in those volumes of the Old and New Testament, which are called canonical books, concerning which there never was any controversy. And this is the number of them, and the order in which they are received in the Church of God :—The five Books of Moses, the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two Books of Samuel, two of Kings, two of Chronicles, the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job ; also the Psalms of David, the three Books of Solomon—namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs ; the four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel ; to these also the twelve minor prophets. Furthermore, the canonical books of the New Testament are, the four Evangelists—namely, St Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

John ; the Acts of the Apostles ; the fourteen Epistles of St Paul, and seven of the other apostles ; the Revelation of the Apostle St John.

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V. We receive these books alone as sacred, and canonical or authentic, by which our faith is to be strengthened, confirmed, and established. Therefore, without any doubt, we believe all those things which are contained in them. And that not only because the Church receives and approves of these books as canonical, but because the Holy Spirit himself testifies to our consciences that they emanated from God ; and on this account especially, because the Scriptures themselves, even through themselves, do testify, and commend, and prove their own authority, and sanctity, and verity, inasmuch as they whose minds were naturally dark and ignorant of all those things which have been predicted in these Scriptures, may yet clearly behold and sensibly perceive their fulfilment and complete accomplishment.

VI. Furthermore, we have appointed a difference between these sacred books and those which they call apocryphal books, even considering and allowing that the Apocrypha may be read in the Church ; and also that it is lawful to receive instruction out of them, so far as they agree with the canonical books. Yet the authority and firmness of these books cannot be admitted so as that, by their testimony, any doctrine of faith and of the Christian religion should be established ; nor can it be admitted that they should have any power to invalidate or diminish the authority of the other, that is, of the canonical books.

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VII. We believe that this sacred Scripture most perfectly



embraceth all the will of God, and that in it are abundantly taught all those things which of necessity must be believed by men, in order that they might obtain salvation. Therefore, seeing that the whole rule of that divine worship which God requireth of the faithful is there most exactly and completely described ; to no man (although endued with apostolical dignity, and, indeed, to no angel sent from heaven, as St Paul declareth) is it lawful to teach anything contrary to that which we have been already taught in the sacred Scriptures. For whereas it is forbidden that any one should either add or take away from this Word of God, by this very thing it is declared that this sacred doctrine is quite sufficient and perfect, and absolutely complete in all its numbers and parts. And therefore, with these divine Scriptures themselves, and with the pure verity of God, no other writings of men, although endued with holiness, no custom, nor any multitude, nor antiquity, nor prescription or rule of times, nor succession of persons, nor any councils ; lastly, no decrees of men, or statutes devised by men, are to be compared, seeing it is so that the truth of God is far more excellent. For all men by their own nature are liars, and lighter than vanity itself. Therefore with all our hearts we reject whatsoever does not agree with this most certain and infallible rule, according as we have been taught by the apostles ; for they say, "Try the spirits, whether they are of God. . . . And if any come unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house," &c., (2 Tim. iii. ; 1 Pet. i. 11 ; Prov. xxx. 5 ; Gal. iii. 15 ; Rev. xxii. 18 ; John xv. 15 ; Acts xx. 27 ; 1 Tim. i. 3 ; 2 John i. 10 ; Gal. i. 8 ; 1 Cor. xv. 2 ; Acts xxvi. 22 ; 1 Pet. iv. 11 ; John iv. 25 ; Isa. i. 12 ; 1 Cor. ii. 4 ; Rom. iii. 4 ; 1 Cor. iii. 11 ; Deut. xii. 32 ; Matt. xv. 3, and xvii. 5 ; Mark vii. 7 ; 1 Thess. ii. 2 ; 1 John iv. 1.)

VIII. According to this verity and Word of God, we believe in the one only true God, who is one in essence, but truly distinguished from all eternity by His matchless and incommunicable attributes into three Persons—namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, (1 John ii. 23; Isa. xliii. 11; John i. 1-12; 1 John i. 1; Rev. xix. 13; Prov. viii. 22; John i. 14.) For the Father truly is the fountain and the origin of all things, visible and invisible. The Son is the word, the wisdom, and the image of the Father; but the Holy Ghost is the power and the virtue which emanates from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, so that this distinction does not cause that God should be, as it were, divided into three parts; forasmuch as the Scripture teacheth us that both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost have in their own attributes a distinct hypostasis or subsistence. Therefore, it is certain that the Father is not the Son, neither is the Son the Father, neither is the Holy Ghost either the Father or the Son. In the meantime, though these persons are thus distinct, yet they are not divided, nor confused, nor mixed; for neither the Father, nor yet the Holy Ghost assumed our nature, but the Son alone. The Father never was without His Son, nor yet without His Holy Spirit, because each are of the same essence, and of the same eternity; for none of these are either prior or ulterior, because all these three are one, both in verity and power, both in goodness and in mercy.

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IX. But as we know all these things by the testimonies of the sacred Scripture, so also by their effects in us which we ourselves feel within ourselves. And truly the testimonies of the sacred Scripture, which teach us to believe in this sacred Trinity, occur frequently in the Old Testament, which may not now be numbered; but we shall select certain sen-

tences, such as these: In Gen. i. God speaks—"Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness. . . . Male," I say, "and female created He them." Also, "Behold, the man is become as one of us," (Gen. iii.) For whereas it is said, "Let us make man after our likeness," the plurality of persons in the Deity is apparent. But when it is said, "God created," &c., the unity of the Divinity is declared. But although it is not here expressed how many persons there are, nevertheless that which is obscurely delivered to us in the Old Testament, is explained more clearly in the New Testament. For when our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized in Jordan, (Matt. iii. 16,) the voice of the Father was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son;" and the Son himself was seen in the water, but the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. And on this account, in the public baptism of all the faithful, we are instructed by our Saviour to use this form, who said unto His apostles, "Baptize ye all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xxviii. 19.) So also, in Luke i. 35, the angel Gabriel thus speaks to Mary, the mother of our Lord: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Also, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all," (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) Also, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: which three are one," (1 John v. 7.) In all which places we are most amply taught that there are three persons in one God. But although this doctrine transcends all the capacity of human understanding, nevertheless we now firmly believe it according to the Word of God, waiting until we shall enjoy the full knowledge of Him in heaven. Likewise the benefits and blessings which each one of these three persons do bestow upon us are to be ob-

served; for the Father is our Creator by His power, but the Son is called our Saviour and our Redeemer, because He hath redeemed us with His own blood. The Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier, because He dwells in our hearts, (Mal. ii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 2; 1 John iv. 14; Gal. iv. 6; Tit. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 9, xiv. 15.) And the true Church hath always held fast this holy doctrine of the sacred Trinity from the age of the apostles, and ever since then, even unto these times, and defends it against the Jews, Mahometans, and other false Christians and heretics. Such were Marcion, Manes, Praxeas, Samosatenus, and such like, who were all deservedly rejected by the orthodox fathers. And so here we willingly receive those three creeds—namely, the creed of the apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian, and whatsoever is in unison with the judgment of these three creeds concerning this doctrine.

X. We believe that Jesus Christ, with regard to His Divine nature, is the only-begotten Son of God from all eternity, and that He was not made or created, (John i. 18, 49,) (for then would He be a creature,) but He is of the same essence with the Father, and co-eternal with Him; for He is the very image of the substance of the Father, and the splendour and brightness of His glory, equal to Him in all things, (Col. i. 15; John x. 30; Phil. ii. 6; Heb. i. 3; John viii. 23, ix. 36; Acts viii. 37; Rom. ix. 5.) But He is the Son of God not only from that time in which He took upon Him our human nature, but from eternity, as these testimonies brought forth one after another do teach us. Moses saith, (Gen. i.) “that God created the world;” but St John saith, that all things were made by the Word, whom he calls God. Also, the apostle to the Hebrews declares that God created all things by His Son Jesus Christ, (Col. i. 16.) Therefore it follows, that He who also is called God, and the Word, and the Son, and Jesus Christ, existed at

that very time, seeing that all things were built and made by Him. On this account the prophet Micah, (chap. i. ver. 2,) says that His goings forth have been from the beginning, from the days of eternity. Also, He is without beginning of days and without end of life. Therefore He is the true God whom we invoke, adore, and worship.

XI. We believe also, and confess that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son from eternity. Therefore He was not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeded only from both, who in order is the third Person of the Trinity, of the same essence, glory, and majesty with the Father and the Son; and therefore also He himself is the true and eternal God, as the sacred Scriptures teach us, (Heb. vii. 3; John xiv. 6, xv. 26.)

XII. We believe that the Father, through His Word, that is, His Son, created heaven and earth, and all other creatures out of nothing, and gave to each of them their form, and their various faculties, as it seemed good to Him, that they might be subservient to their Creator; and that He now also cherishes, sustains, and rules all these by His own eternal providence, and infinite power; and that these creatures should indeed be serviceable to man, but that man should with all his faculties serve the true God. Also He created angels, all good by nature, that they should be His servants, and minister also to His elect; of which angels, some however fell from that excellent nature in which God had created them, into eternal perdition; but the other angels, by the especial and singular grace of God, stood firm in their own first estate; the devils, indeed, and those evil spirits are now so depraved and corrupted, that they are become the sworn enemies both of God and of all that is good; who like robbers are lying in ambush in some secret place, that by their im-



postures, subtleties, and deceits, they might cast down and destroy each and all of the members of the Church. Therefore, being appointed on account of their own malice and wickedness to eternal damnation, they anticipate, and expect from day to day, the horrible punishments of their wickednesses. Wherefore in this place we reject the error of the Sadducees, who denied that there were either angels or spirits; and also the error of the Manichæans, who assert that the devils gave a beginning to themselves by themselves, and that they are evil according to their own original nature, but that they are not depraved on account of their wilful disobedience, (John xv. 26; Gen. i. 1; Isa. xi. 26; Heb. iii. 4; Rev. iv. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. iii. 14, i. 3; Ps. ciii. 21, iv. 3-8; John viii. 44; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Luke viii. 31; 1 Pet. v. 8; Matt. xxv. 40; Acts xxiii. 8.)

XIII. We believe that this most blessed and most high God, after He had created all things, by no means committed them to be ruled by the will of chance or fortune, but that He himself so continually rules and governs all these things by the unerring rule of His own most sacred and holy will, that nothing can happen or come to pass without His decree and ordination; although God cannot possibly be said to be the author of sin, or arraigned on account of those evils which occur in this world. For His infinite and incomprehensible power and goodness shines far and wide; and then also God decrees and performs all His works and all His actions holily and justly, even when the devil and impious and wicked men are acting unjustly. But whenever God does anything which surpasses our understanding, let us not curiously inquire into that which is beyond our comprehension, seeing that they are secret, but rather let us humbly and reverently adore the righteous judgments of God. It is sufficient for us (as the disciples of Christ) to

learn those things only which He himself teaches us in His own Word; neither is it lawful that we should presume to overleap those boundaries. But this doctrine brings to us immense consolation. For by it, we know that nothing happens to us by chance, but all things according to the will of our heavenly Father, who truly watches over us with paternal care, having all things in subjection to Him, so that verily not a hair of our head (for all are numbered, even to one) can be plucked away, nor can the smallest sparrow fall to the ground, without the will of our heavenly Father. Therefore we entirely acquiesce in these things, knowing that God holds the devils, and all our enemies, as it were, in chains, and so bridled, that without His will and wise permission, they are not able to hurt any of us. And in this place we reject the detestable opinion of the Epicureans, who pretended that God is unconcerned, and does nothing, and commits all things to chance, (Acts xxiii. 8; John v. 17; Heb. i. 3; Prov. xvi. 4; James iv. 15; Job i. 21; 2 Kings xii. 20; Acts iv. 28; 1 Sam. viii. 25; Ps. cxv. 3; Isa. xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6; Deut. xix. 5; Prov. xxi. 1; Ps. cv. 25; Isa. x. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 11; Ezek. xli. 9; Rom. i. 26; 1 Kings xi. 23; Gen. xlv. 8, l. 20; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Matt. viii. 31; 1 John iii. 8.)

XIV. We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth according to His own image, that is, good, righteous, and holy, so that he was able, by his own power and judgment, to render his own will agreeable and conformable to the will of God. But when he was in that honour, he knew it not, nor did he understand his own excellency; but knowingly and wilfully yielded himself to sin, and consequently subjected himself to death and the curse; whilst he gave ear to the words and subtle insinuations of the devil, he transgressed the commandment of life

which he had received from the Lord ; and his nature being now altogether vicious and depraved on account of his sin, he entirely withdrew and alienated himself from God, (his true life,) whereby it came to pass that he subjected himself to death, both corporeal and spiritual. Therefore now, man being become wicked, profane, and perverse, and being depraved in all his ways, he has lost all those excellent gifts with which God had adorned him, so that none are left except a few sparks or slender vestiges of them, which are sufficient, nevertheless, to render men inexcusable, because whatever light is in us is become changed into thick darkness, even as the Scripture itself teaches us, saying, "The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not." For here John manifestly calleth men darkness. Therefore, whatsoever things are ascribed to the free will of man, with good reason we reject them, seeing he is the servant of sin ; nor can man perform anything of himself, unless it be given him from heaven. For who dares to boast that he is able to perform whatsoever he willeth, seeing that Christ himself hath said, "No man can come unto me, except my Father which hath sent me draw him?" Who will boast of his own will, who hears that all the affections of the flesh are enmities to God? Who will boast of his own understanding, who knows that the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God? In fine, who will extol his own devices and cogitations in part, who understandeth that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that if we are sufficient, that is all of God? Therefore let that remain certain and firm, which the apostle hath said, "That it is God who worketh in us, both that we might will, and also do according to his good pleasure." For there is no mind in man, no will in man that acquiesces in the will of God, in which Christ himself has not first operated upon ; because also He

himself teaches us, "Without me ye can do nothing," (Matt. xx. 29, 30 ; Gen. i. 26 ; Eccles. vii. 30 ; Eph. iv. 24 ; Ps. xlix. ; Isa. lix. 2 ; Gen. viii. 17 ; Rom. v. 12, iii. 10 ; Acts iv. 16 ; 1 Kings i. 20, 21 ; Acts xvii. 27 ; John vi. 44 ; Rom. viii. 7 ; 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; 2 Cor. iii. 5 ; Phil. ii. 13 ; John xv. 5.)

XV. We believe that the disobedience of Adam, which men call original sin, is spread and diffused throughout the whole human race. And original sin is the corruption of our whole nature, and an hereditary vice, by which even infants themselves in their mother's womb are polluted ; and because it is like unto some noxious root, it engenders all manner of sins in man, and it is so vile, filthy, and execrable before God, that it is sufficient to condemn the whole human race. Nor, indeed, by baptism itself is it to be believed that it is entirely destroyed, and utterly plucked up by the roots, seeing that from it, as from a corrupt spring, perpetual waves and rivulets are constantly rising and running over ; although it is not able to bring the children of God into condemnation, because it is not imputed to them, but is remitted to them by the pure grace and mercy of God ; not that trusting to this remission they should sleep, but that from a sense of this depravity it might excite in the faithful more frequent prayers and sighs to be saved from sin, and that on this account they might the more fervently desire to be delivered from this body of death. Therefore here we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that original sin is nothing else than imitation, (Phil. ii. 13 ; John xv. 5 ; Ps. li. 7 ; Rom. iii. 10 ; Gen. vi. 3 ; John iii. 6 ; Rom. v. 14 ; Eph. i. 5 ; Rom. vii. 18-24.)

XVI. We believe that God, (after that the whole offspring

of Adam was fallen into perdition and destruction by the sin of the first man) demonstrated Himself such, and proved Himself to be, what He really and truly is, namely, both merciful and just,—merciful, indeed, by delivering and preserving those from damnation, whom in His own eternal counsel, according to His own gracious goodness, He had chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord, without any respect of our work; but just in leaving the impenitent and unbelievers in their own fall and perdition into which they themselves had plunged themselves.

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XVII. We believe also that our most blessed and most high God, (when He saw that man had brought upon himself both corporeal and spiritual death, and damnation, and had rendered himself miserable and accursed,) being moved by His own admirable wisdom and goodness, both sought and consoled him, who now out of fear fled from Him; His own Son which should be born of a woman, being promised to him, who should bruise the head of the serpent, and should render man happy and blessed.

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XVIII. We verily believe that God at length fulfilled the promise (made to the fathers by the mouth of the holy prophets) when the time appointed by Him was come, He sent His only-begotten and eternal Son into this world, who took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and He truly assumed our real and very human nature, with all its infirmities, (sin only excepted,) whilst He was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without any work of man. Moreover, He took upon Him our human nature, not only as it respects the body, but also as it respects the soul; for



He was endued with a true human soul, that He might be a true man. Because as the soul, no less than the body itself, had become liable to damnation, it was necessary that He should assume both that and this, that He might save both at once. Therefore, contrary to the error of those who deny that Christ assumed human flesh, we confess that Christ was a partaker of flesh and blood like as also are His brethren, descended from the loins of David according to the flesh: made, I say, of the seed of David according to the same flesh: the fruit of the womb of the Virgin Mary, born of a woman: the offspring of David: the branch out of the root of Jesse: of the tribe of Judah, and sprung from the Jews themselves according to the flesh, and, finally, the true seed of Abraham and David, because He truly took upon Him the seed of Abraham, as it is said He was made like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted, so that He might verily be our Emmanuel, that is, God with us.

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XIX. We believe, also, that by this conception the person of the Son has been for ever inseparably joined together, and for ever united with our human nature, so that there are not two sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures in one person, of which each retaineth its attributes and properties, so that as the Divine nature has always remained uncreated, and without beginning of days, without end of life, and filleth heaven and earth: so, the human nature has not lost its properties, but has remained a creature, having had a beginning of days, and a finite nature. For Christ hath retained all those things which truly appertain to the body, and although by His resurrection He gave to His body immortality, yet, nevertheless, He did not take away from it, nor change the verity and reality of the human nature. For our salvation and resurrection dependeth upon the verity of

His body. Furthermore, these two natures are so united and conjoined, that even in His death, verily they were not separated. Therefore, when He was dying, that which He commended to His Father, was truly the human spirit departing from His body; but in the meantime the divine nature always remained united to the human nature, even when he was lying in the grave; so that the Deity was no less in Him then, than it was when He was an infant, although for a time He did not exert Himself. Wherefore we confess that He is very God and very man; very God truly, that He might by His power overcome death, and very man that He might suffer death for us in the weakness of His flesh.

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XX. We believe that God (who is supremely and infinitely just as well as merciful) sent His Son, that He might assume that nature which had sinned by disobedience, that in that very nature He might suffer the just punishments due to sin, and make satisfaction for sins by His painful death and passion. Therefore God has declared and manifested His justice in burdening His own Son with our sins; and He has bountifully poured out, and manifested His own goodness and mercy towards us guilty sinners, deserving condemnation, whilst out of His great love towards us, wherewith He loved us, He delivered His own Son to death, and raised Him again from the dead for our justification, that we might obtain immortality and eternal life through Him.

XXI. We believe that Jesus Christ is that great High Priest, consecrated and ordained with an oath for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec; who, in our nature and for us, offered Himself upon the altar of the cross, and presents Himself before the Father, and by His plenary satis-

faction hath appeased His wrath ; for He shed forth His own blood for the expiation of our sins, even as the prophets had foretold it should be. For it is written, that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon the Son of God, and that with His stripes we are healed. Also, that He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and with the wicked, and condemned as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, although he had first pronounced Him innocent. Therefore, He restored that which He had not taken away, and suffered the just for the unjust, both in His body and in His soul, so that feeling the horror and dreadful punishment due to our sins, He sweated water and blood ; and at length also He exclaimed, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” Verily He endured all these things for the remission of our sins. Wherefore we truly say, with St Paul, that we know nothing, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Moreover we esteem all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, as we in His wounds do experience consolation of every sort. Therefore there is no necessity that we should either desire or think of any other means or ways whereby we can be reconciled to God, besides this sole and most perfect offering once made, whereby all the faithful who are sanctified are consecrated and perfected for ever. And this is the cause why He himself was called by the angel, Jesus, that is, Saviour, because He should save His people from their sins.

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XXII. We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, imparting to us true faith, to the end that we may obtain and enjoy the true knowledge of this so great a mystery. Which faith embraceth Jesus Christ with all His merits, and shews to us the whole work of Christ, and there-

fore faith seeketh nothing but Christ. For it is of necessity, either that all things which are required unto our salvation are not in Christ, or, if all things are in Christ, it followeth that he who by faith possesseth Jesus Christ, hath also at the same time complete and perfect salvation. Therefore it is altogether horrid blasphemy against God, to say that Christ is by no means sufficient, but also that there are other works required. For then it would follow that Christ is only a Saviour in part; and therefore, according to the righteous law and declaration of God, (Rom. iii. 21-24,) we say, with St Paul, that we are justified by faith alone, or, by faith without the works of the law. Moreover, properly speaking, we by no means understand that faith itself, through itself, or of itself, justifieth us; as that is only, as it were, the instrumental means, principle, or power, whereby we apprehend Christ our righteousness. Therefore Christ himself is our righteousness, who imputes to us all His merits, but faith is the instrumental means whereby we are united to Christ in the fellowship or communion of all His benefits, and retained therein; so that all these our blessings which flow from Christ unto us, are far more than sufficient unto our absolution from sins.

XXIII. We believe that all our happiness and blessedness consisteth in the remission of our sins, which is in Christ Jesus; and that in it alone is contained all our righteousness before God, as St Paul teacheth us out of David, preaching the blessedness of those to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. But also the same apostle saith, "That we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Therefore, resting as it were on this firm and immovable foundation, we ascribe all praise and glory to God, having always the most humble thoughts of ourselves, as we truly know what we really are. And

therefore we do not trust in ourselves, nor put the least confidence in our own works, but in the sole, all-sufficient, and meritorious obedience of Jesus Christ crucified, and in that alone, and in Him only, we entirely acquiesce, and in Him only we rest; and Christ and His righteousness is ours, in whom we believe. Moreover, this alone is abundantly sufficient to cover and obliterate all our iniquities, and also to render us safe and secure against all temptations. For this alone drives far from the conscience all slavish fear, all horror, and all terror, by His obedience and merit, we approach and draw near to God; nor do we imitate the example of our first parents, who, flying through fear, endeavoured to cover themselves with fig leaves, and to conceal themselves. And truly, if with regard to ourselves or to any other creatures, it had been necessary that we should stand alone, and in our own deserts before God, it is quite certain that we should have been lost for ever. Therefore it is better for each one of us to pray with David, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

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XXIV. We believe that by this true faith, through the hearing of the Word of God, and through the work of the Holy Ghost wrought in each one of us, that we are regenerated, and, as it were, made new creatures, that He might raise us up to live a new life, and make us free from the servitude of sin. Therefore it is so far from this, that this justifying faith should call men from a righteous and a holy way of living, or render men lukewarm, that on the contrary without this faith no man is ever able to do, and acceptably to perform, any good thing on account of God, but all things on account of himself, or on account of the fear of just condemnation. Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith in



man should be idle and unprofitable. For we do not now speak of that vain and dead faith, but of that only which is said in the Scripture to work by love; and which also constrains a man that he should exercise himself in those works which God himself has commanded in His own Word. Truly these works, emanating from the sincere root of this faith unfeigned, are on this account good and acceptable to God, because they are sanctified by His grace; but they are altogether of no weight in justifying us. For we are justified by faith in Christ, and indeed before we have performed any good works. For our good works can no more be before faith, than that the fruit of a tree should be good, before the tree itself is made good. Therefore, indeed, we perform good works, but not that we should merit anything by them. For what can we merit? Seeing that we are regenerated by God unto good works, the which if we do, we are the more and more obligated to God, not God to us. For it is God which worketh in us, both that we might will, and that we might do according to His most righteous and holy will. Wherefore, let us always have regard unto that saying which is written, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do." Moreover, we do not on this account deny that God rewards good works in His saints; but we say, that He does this of His own sole grace, that He might crown His gifts in us. But yet, although we do good works, nevertheless we do not place in them any hope of our salvation. For we are able to perform no works which are not stained with the infirmity of our flesh, and therefore deserving of chastisements and punishment. Because, if even we should seek to bring forward any work of that sort, yet the sole remembrance of sin is sufficient to remove it out of the sight of God. Therefore, we should always be in doubt, and tossed about here and

there, and our own miserable consciences would always be vexed and tormented, unless they leaned upon, and trusted firmly in the merit of the death and of the passion of our Saviour, and unfeignedly acquiesced in it alone.

XXV. We believe that all the ceremonies and figures of the law, and that finally all the shadows ceased at the advent of Christ; so that also, their use amongst Christians is now taken away, and ought to be abolished. In the meantime, nevertheless, the verity and substance of them remaineth to us in Christ, in whom all have been fulfilled. And on this account we still make use of the testimonies of the law and the prophets, as by them also we confirm ourselves in the doctrine of the gospel, and compose and settle all our life honestly and truly to the glory of God according to His own will.

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XXVI. We believe also that we have no access to God, but through the only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ, the righteous, who on this account was made man (uniting His divine to our human nature) that He might open for us miserable men, a way to the majesty of God, who otherwise would for ever have been hidden from us. Nevertheless, the majesty and power of this Mediator, whom God hath constituted and ordained between Himself and us, ought by no means on that account to terrify us so far, as that therefore we should think of complaining to, and seeking the help of any other for His mediation. For there is none, neither amongst the inhabitants of heaven, nor amongst terrestrial creatures, who embraces us with a greater love than Christ himself; who, when He was in the form of God, humbled Himself and took on Him the form of a servant of man; and on account of us, He was in all things made like unto His brethren. But if any other mediator should be sought for by us, who

should be esteemed worthy on account of some benevolent acts done to us, whom, we ask, can we find who loves us more ardently than Christ himself, who for us, whilst we were as yet His enemies, willingly laid down His own life? If, moreover, another mediator should be sought for by us, who should be renowned on account of his great authority and power; who ever possessed such authority and power as He himself who sitteth on the right hand of God, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given? Finally, who should the rather be heard by God, than the only-begotten and only infinitely beloved Son of God? Therefore unbelief alone has introduced this custom whereby men think to worship the saints, whom they do the rather disturb and distress, whilst they do such things, which were so far from what they themselves ever did when they were living here, that they rather constantly rejected such things from a consciousness of their own situation and duty, as their writings do testify. Nor here is our unworthiness to be pleaded as an excuse for such great impiety. For we by no means offer up our prayers, trusting in our own righteousness, but in the sole worthiness, excellency, and infinite merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is made ours through faith; hence the apostle, that he might take away from us that vain and empty fear, (or rather unbelief,) truly says, that Christ was made in all things like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in those things which pertain to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted. Moreover, that he might increase spiritual life in us, whereby we might approach with confidence to this great High Priest, the same apostle adds, "Having therefore a great high priest which is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which

cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come with confidence unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The same apostle says, that we have permission to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Let us therefore draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, &c. Also, Christ hath an everlasting priesthood: wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. What need is there for more? Seeing that Christ himself says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Why should we seek for ourselves another advocate? But rather, seeing that it hath pleased God himself to give us His own Son to be our Advocate, let us not seek another, because if we do, we desert Him; lest peradventure, by always seeking another mediator, we at last never find any. For doubtless God knew when He gave Him to us, that we were miserable sinners. Therefore let us obey the command of Christ himself, let us draw near and pray to our heavenly Father, through Him himself, even through one Jesus Christ, our only Mediator, as also He himself hath taught us in the Lord's Prayer. For we are certain that we shall obtain all those things which we ask from the Father in His name.

XXVII. We believe and confess that there is only one catholic or universal Church, which is the veritable congregation or assembly of all faithful Christians, who expect all their salvation from one Jesus Christ alone, that is to say, forasmuch as they have been washed in His precious blood, and sanctified and sealed by His Spirit. Moreover, this Church, as it has been from the beginning of the world, so also, it shall endure even unto the end of it. This also is evi-

dent on this account, because Christ is an eternal King, who never can be without His subjects. Furthermore, God defends this Church against all the fury and violence of the world ; although at sundry times it may appear very small, and may seem as it were extinct in the eyes of men, like as it was in that most perilous time of Ahab ; yet even then, God is said to have reserved to Himself seven thousand men, which had not bowed their knees unto Baal. Finally, this holy Church is confined and limited to no particular place, nor is it restrained or limited to any particular sects of persons. But the Church is spread abroad and scattered throughout the whole terrestrial globe ; yet still the whole Church is joined together, and united together, in one mind, and in one will, and in the same spirit, by the power of faith, through the operation of God the Holy Ghost.

XXVIII. We believe that inasmuch as this is that sacred assembly and holy multitude of those which must be saved, and as there is no salvation out of it ; that no man (of what dignity and honour whatsoever he may be) should withdraw and separate himself from it, so as of his own accord only to content himself alone, and live separately from it. But on the other hand, that all and each should adjoin and unite themselves to this assembly, and anxiously preserve the unity of the Church, and each submit himself both to the doctrine and discipline of the Church ; finally, that he should of his own accord yield his whole life to the yoke of Christ, and as it were endeavour to promote the edification of his brethren, which are the common members of the same body, like as God has bountifully imparted His gifts to each one of us. Moreover, that these things might be the better observed, the companies of all the faithful, according to the Word of God, are to separate themselves from those which are so con-



stituted and formed that they are out of the Church ; and they are to join themselves to the assembly and congregation of the faithful, wheresoever God hath appointed it ; although the adverse edicts of princes or magistrates may prohibit it, even although they denounce against them which attend the assemblies of the faithful, the extreme punishment of corporeal death. Therefore, whosoever withdraw themselves from this veritable and true Church, do openly oppose the command of God himself.

XXIX. We believe, moreover, that, with the greatest diligence and prudence, we ought, through the Word of God, carefully to seek out and discern which is this true Church ; seeing that all, as many as daily grow up in this world, do assume the name and title of "Church," and profess that they are holy. But we are by no means speaking now of the congregation of hypocrites which are mixed up with the good in the Church, in which they are present in the body, but only of distinguishing the body and assembly of the true Church from all other sects, who falsely boast that they are members of the Church. By these marks, therefore, the true Church may be discerned from the false. If in it exists the pure preaching of the gospel, and the lawful administration of the sacraments, according to the commandment of Christ, —if also righteous ecclesiastical discipline is exercised to restrain vices,—if, lastly, (that we may embrace all things in one word,) it performeth all things according to the rule of the Word of God, and if it rejecteth whatsoever things as are opposed to it, and if it acknowledgeth Christ to be the only Head of the Church. By these marks, I say, it is certain that the true Church may be discerned and distinguished ; from which it is not lawful that any one should be disjoined or separated. But the true members of this true Church are to be known by the common marks of all Christians. Such

is faith, whereby Christ being once apprehended as their only Saviour, they avoid and fly from sin, and follow after righteousness. Also they love God and their neighbours, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left. They crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts ; yet by no means is it, as if there was no more infirmity in them, because that is it, against which they fight during the whole course of their life by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then also they fly to the precious blood, death, and passion and obedience of Christ our Lord, as unto a most invincible garrison and a most safe refuge ; as in Him alone they know they have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, through faith in Him. But the false Church, on the other hand, always ascribes more to its own institutions and traditions, than it does to the Word of God. But to the yoke of Christ it does not suffer itself to be subject ; nor does it administer the sacraments according to the command of Christ ; but of her own will, she sometimes addeth to them, and at other times taketh away something from them. Moreover, it always trusteth more in men than in Christ ; and, in a hostile manner, it persecuteth those who study to live holily, and to form and order their life agreeable to the written Word of God ; and who rebuke and reprehend their vices, such as covetousness and idolatry. By these things it is easy to discern and to know the true Church from the other.

XXX. We believe that this true Church ought to be governed and ruled by that spiritual government which God himself hath taught us in His own Word ; so that there are in it pastors and ministers who purely and veritably preach the word of life and administer the sacraments. Also there should be elders and deacons, who should constitute the senate of the Church, that, as it were, by their means the

true religion might be preserved, and the veritable and true doctrine might be everywhere retained and propagated ; and that men who have given themselves over to vices and sins, might be spiritually arrested and reformed, and, as it were, restrained from sin by a certain bridle of discipline. Also that the poor and the afflicted should be assisted with help and consolation according to the necessity of each ; for then all things are done decently and in order in the Church, when faithful and pious men are chosen to the government of it, according to the direction of St Paul, which is given to us in the third chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy, and in the first chapter to Titus.

XXXI. We believe that the ministers, elders, and deacons ought to be called to these their offices, and promoted by the legitimate election of the Church ; earnest prayer to God being resorted to by it, and in that way and manner which is prescribed to us in the Word of God. But, in the first place, each of them should beware lest they should thrust themselves by unlawful means into these offices. For it is expected of all, inasmuch as men are called by God himself, that they possess a certain testimony of their own vocation, and that they know that it is from the Lord. Moreover, the ministers of the Word of God, wheresoever they are placed, do each and all of them possess the same authority and power, as they are all equally the servants of Christ, who is the only universal Bishop and Head of His Church. Furthermore, lest this holy ordinance of God should either be violated, or brought into contempt, or profaned, all Christians ought honourably to esteem the ministers of the Word and elders of the Church, on account of the work committed to each of them, and preserve peace with them, and as much as lieth in them, mutually abstain from brawlings and contentions.

XXXII. In the meantime, we verily believe that it is profitable that the elders which preside over the churches, should constitute a certain rule or discipline amongst themselves, with a view to the conservation of the body of the Church; but yet, that they should studiously beware, lest by any means they should swerve or turn aside from those things which Christ himself, our only Master, hath once appointed. Therefore we reject all human inventions and all laws which are introduced into the worship of God, lest by any means through them our consciences should be ensnared and entangled. And we receive those things alone which are calculated to cherish, and maintain, and nourish concord, and to retain us in the obedience of God. To this also, excommunication, as it is set forth by the command of the Word of God, is especially necessary, including those other things which appertain to ecclesiastical discipline.

XXXIII. We believe that God, on account of our dulness and infirmity, has instituted for us sacraments, that He might seal in us His promises, and that they might be to us most certain pledges of His divine benevolence towards us, and of His gifts, and that they might cherish, and sustain, and confirm our faith. Truly he added these to the Word of the gospel, as also He declares to us in His Word, and by this very thing, He manifests more efficaciously to our external senses that it is He himself who worketh those things internally in our hearts; and, finally, that He might graciously communicate to us His salvation, and more and more confirm us in the eternal merit of Christ. For the sacraments are seals and visible signs of internal and invisible things, through which, as through means, God himself worketh in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore these signs are by no means vain and useless; neither have they been instituted to deceive and to disappoint us. For the verity of

them is Jesus Christ himself, without whom they would be entirely of no avail. Moreover, that number of sacraments is sufficient for us, which Christ himself, our true and only Teacher, has instituted. But they are only two—namely, the sacrament of Baptism, and of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

XXXIV. We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, (who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,) by His own most precious blood once shed, and offered to be a propitiation for sinners, hath laid aside the necessity of any other effusion of blood, because the end is accomplished. And circumcision being abolished, which was made through blood, baptism has been instituted in its place, whereby we are received into the Church of God, and are separated from all other nations, and from all strange religions, and we are consecrated to Him alone, whose sign and seals we bear. Finally, baptism is to us a testimony that He himself, who is our eternal God, is also our loving Father for ever and ever. Wherefore the Lord has commanded all His people to be baptized with pure water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; that He might signify that through the blood of Christ, and through the Holy Ghost, that He performs and works internally the same in the soul, which water does externally on our bodies. For like as water poured upon us is remarkable for its cleansing effects, and as by its external application to the body, it evidently cleanses and washes away all the uncleanness of the body, even so the blood of Christ (being applied by the eternal Spirit) washes the soul, and cleanseth it from all sin, and regenerates us, who were children of wrath, and makes us children of God. Not that this material water performs these things, but the veritable sprinkling of the most precious blood of the Son of God, which is to us



as it were that Red Sea, through which we have passed, that being delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh, that is, of the devil, we might enter into the spiritual land of Canaan, that is, into heaven itself. Therefore the ministers do indeed give the sacrament to us and the thing visible ; but the Lord himself shews to us what is signified by this sacrament, to wit, His gifts, and invisible graces, washing, purifying, and cleansing our souls from all their uncleannesses and iniquities ; at the same time renewing and replenishing our hearts with all consolation ; finally, freely giving to us the veritable certainty of His paternal goodness, and enduing us with the new man, that is, the new nature which is divine, and freeing us from the old man with all his deeds. Therefore here we reject the error of those, who not only are not content with one baptism once received, but also they condemn the baptism of infants, born of the faithful. But we believe that they ought to be sealed with the seal of the covenant, for the same cause whereby formerly the little children in Israel were circumcised—namely, because that these same promises have been made to our infants ; and truly Christ no less shed His blood for the infants of the faithful, that He might wash them, than He did for those that are come to years. And on this account it is just that they should receive the seal or sacrament of that thing which Christ, for the sake of them, has wrought out ; because in the law the Lord orders the sacrament of the death and passion of Christ to be communicated to children recently born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Christ to come. Besides, what circumcision set forth and declared to the Jewish people, the same does baptism set forth and declare concerning the children of the faithful.

XXXV. We believe also, and confess that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the sacred and holy sacra-

ment of His Supper, that in it He might nourish and sustain us, whom He hath now regenerated and brought into His family, to wit, the Church ; and truly they who are regenerated have within them a twofold life—the one indeed carnal and temporary, which they brought with them from their first nativity ; and this is common to all : the other life, spiritual and heavenly, which is given to them in their second nativity, which is done through the word of the gospel, in union with the body of Christ ; and this is peculiar to the elect of God only. But as God hath appointed earthly and material bread, suitable to the preservation of this carnal and earthly life, which is that life which is common to all ; so for the preservation of that spiritual and heavenly life, which is the peculiar gift of God to the faithful, God hath sent living bread, which descended from heaven—namely, Jesus Christ ; for it is He who nourishes and sustains the spiritual life of the faithful, if He is eaten, that is, if He is applied and received by the Spirit, through faith. But Christ, that He might as it were represent to us this spiritual and heavenly bread, has appointed earthly and visible bread and wine to be a sacrament of His body and of His blood. By these, He verily testifieth to us that as truly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands, and eat it with our mouth, (whereby now and afterwards this our natural life is sustained,) so truly also we that by faith (which is as it were both the hand and mouth of our soul,) do receive the veritable body and the veritable blood of Christ, our only Saviour, into our souls, to nourish and maintain in us spiritual life. Therefore it is most certain that Christ, not without cause, so earnestly commended this His sacrament to us, inasmuch as it is He who truly worketh in us whatsoever He himself representeth to us in these His sacred seals ; although the manner itself transcends the capacity of our nature, neither can it be understood by any body ; because truly all the

operations of the Holy Spirit are secret and incomprehensible. Moreover, we by no means have erred, saying, that that which is eaten is the very natural body itself of Christ, and that that which is drank is His real blood. But the instrument or means by which we eat and drink these, is not our corporeal mouth, but our spirit itself, and that by faith. Because Christ always sitteth on the right hand of the Father in the heavens, nor on that account does He the less communicate Himself to us through faith. Moreover this Supper is that spiritual cup in which Christ gives Himself to us, making us the recipients of all His benefits, and worketh in it by Himself alone, that whereby we obtain the merit of His passion and of His death. For by the eating of His flesh, He himself nourishes, strengthens, and consoles our miserable, afflicted, and sorrowful life with all consolation. Also, by the drinking of His blood, He sustains, restores, and revives it. Furthermore, although the sacraments are joined to the thing itself signified, nevertheless, both these things are not received by all. For the wicked man receiveth the sacrament to his own condemnation, but he does not receive the blessing, or the verity of the sacrament. By the liberality of the Word, Judas and Simon Magus both indeed received the sacrament; but in nowise did they receive Christ himself, who is signified in it. For Christ is communicated to the faithful *only*. Finally, we partake of this sacred and holy sacrament in the assembly of the people of God with the greatest humility and reverence, holily commemorating and celebrating with thanksgiving the remembrance of the death of Christ our Saviour; and there publicly acknowledging the confession of the Christian faith and religion. Therefore no man ought to place himself before this cup who has not first proved and judged himself, lest by eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, he should eat and drink judgment and condemnation for himself. Moreover, by the

use of this sacrament, the most fervent love is rekindled in us, both towards God himself, and also our neighbour. Therefore we here verily reject, as real profaneness, all the deceiving mockeries and damnable comments of men (which they have added and mixed up with the sacraments;) and we affirm that all the pious are content with that order alone and rite, which Christ and His apostles have delivered to us, and that we ought to speak of these mysteries, of which also they have spoken, in the same manner also.

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XXXVI. We believe that the most blessed and most high God, on account of the corruption and depravity of the human race, has appointed kings, princes, and magistrates; and willeth that this world should be governed by laws and a certain polity, to restrain and punish the wickednesses and crimes of men, and that all things amongst men should be done in a right way. And on this account God hath armed the magistrates themselves with a sword, that they should restrain indeed the wicked, but defend the righteous. Moreover, they should be solicitous not only for the preservation of the civil government, but they should endeavour to preserve the sacred ministry and Word of God, and forbid all idolatry and false worship, so that the kingdom of antichrist might be overthrown, but the kingdom of Christ extended and established. Finally, it is their duty so to arrange, that the sacred word of the gospel is preached on all sides and round about, that each and all might hear and perfectly please God, and fear and worship Him, according as it is set forth in His Word. Moreover all men, of whatsoever dignity or condition or state they may be, ought to submit to the lawful magistrates, and to pay to them tribute and taxes and customs, and to please them, and to obey them in all those things which are not repugnant to the Word of God. Also

it is meet that we should pour out prayers and supplications for them, that God would condescend to direct them in all their works, and that we truly under them might live a peaceable and quiet life, with all piety and honesty. Therefore we abhor the errors of all those turbulent men, who trample upon superior powers, governments, laws, and magistrates, and who say that all goods are common, and who endeavour to abolish, and to confound all orders and degrees amongst men, which God has ordained for the preservation of honesty and good behaviour.

XXXVII. Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, (when the time appointed by God, but unknown to all creatures, and when the number of His elect are completed,) that our Lord Jesus Christ will return again from heaven, and that corporeally and visibly, like as formerly He ascended there. He shall appear enrobed in the brightness of immortality, with inconceivable splendour, and adorned with the greatest glory and majesty, as the Judge of the living and the dead, this old world being burnt up with fire and burning flame that He might purify it. But then verily all creatures, both men and women and infants, as many as shall have lived on the earth from the beginning even unto the end of the world, shall then appear before this Supreme Judge even in that day, being summoned by the voice of the archangel and by the trumpet of God. For all who heretofore had died on the earth shall then arise out of their graves, the spirit and the soul of each one being again conjoined and united to its own proper body, in which it had lived. Moreover, they who in the last day shall remain alive, shall by no means die after the manner of other men, but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shall be changed from corruption—namely, into an incorruptible nature. Then the books shall be opened (namely, the books of con-



science), and the dead shall be judged according to those things which they have done in this world, whether they be good or evil ; and then, indeed, shall men render an account for every idle word which they have spoken, although the world now may look upon it as joking, playing, jesting, and mirth. Finally, then, all the hypocrisy of men, and the secrets of the heart of every one of them, shall be publicly laid open before all, so that the sole remembrance and anticipation of this judgment is to the profane and to the wicked, deservedly dreadful, fearful, and terrible ; but to the good and to the elect, a day to be supremely longed for, and full of consolation ; for then their redemption will be manifestly and altogether complete, and they shall obtain the most blissful and most sweet fruits of their labours and sorrows which they have undergone and passed through in this life. Then, I say, their innocence shall be openly acknowledged by all ; and the saints themselves in their turn, shall see the terrible and dreadful vengeance which the Lord shall execute on them who in this world tyrannically distressed and persecuted them with various torments and molestations. Moreover the wicked, being convicted by the very testimony of their own conscience, shall indeed be rendered immortal, but for this state, that they might be tormented in eternal fire (which was prepared for the devil) for ever and ever. But on the other hand, the faithful and the elect shall be rewarded with a crown of glory and honour, and the Son of God shall confess their names before God the Father, and before the angels, and every tear shall be wiped away from their eyes. Then their cause, which now by judges and magistrates is condemned as heretical and as the cause of impiety, shall then be acknowledged to be the cause of the Son of God, and the Lord will graciously reward them with so great glory, as is not possible that it should enter into the heart of man to conceive. Therefore,

with supreme desire we long for this great day of the Lord, in which we shall most completely and eternally possess and fully enjoy all those things promised to us by God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

END OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE BELGIC CONFESSION.

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### REFLECTIONS.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," (John xvii. 3.) From these words, uttered by the lips of eternal Truth, we infer the infinite importance of a saving acquaintance with God through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, inasmuch as eternal life is infallibly connected with spiritual regeneration and union with Christ, (John x. 28.) Therefore it becometh a question of the greatest moment and interest to every man living to ask himself this question, Have I believed on Jesus Christ unto the saving of my soul? Hath God saved me by the washing of regeneration and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost? Have I embraced Jesus Christ as my Saviour, my peace, my sanctification, and my all? Dear reader, this is a momentous question, which thou oughtest to put to thyself for very many and weighty reasons, of the utmost importance to thee, as the Word of God doth teach thee. For St Paul saith, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Now as regeneration is a blessing of such infinite importance unto salvation, and as the eternal merit and un-

searchable riches of Christ are given to all the regenerate, whereby their eternal life is certain, (John x. 28,) and as none can be saved without it, (John iii. 3,) the absolute necessity of it is apparent. Neither is it right to say, that baptism by water is regeneration, or is always accompanied with regeneration, for the Holy Scriptures doth make a manifest distinction between baptism with water and baptism with the Holy Ghost, (Matt. iii. 2.) Also it is right here to state, that many of those who have been baptized with water are still dead in trespasses and sins, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. But the regenerate bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and love God supremely, and seek their happiness in God, and they count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ: and as none of the regenerate can perish, (John x. 28,) and as nothing can separate the regenerate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, (Rom. viii. 33-39,) surely all the regenerate ought unanimously to bless and praise God continually, because He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel, (Ezra iii. 11,) and toward the Church which is composed of all the regenerate, (John vi. 39, 40, 44.) But now with regard to the unregenerate, to you I say, forasmuch as God is merciful and gracious and long-suffering, and as Christ hath once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; and seeing that He is exalted at the right hand of God to give repentance and remission of sins; and seeing that Christ inviteth poor lost sinners to come to Him for salvation, saying, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matt. xi. 28,) I earnestly exhort you to obey the invitation of Christ now whilst it is called to-day; flee from the wrath to come; to-day, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. But by earnest prayer seek the salvation of your souls by embracing Jesus

Christ now whilst it is called to-day ; if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts, but seek His face whose wrath ye cannot bear. Fly to the shelter of His cross, and find salvation there ; seek His face, whose favour is better than life ; seek His face, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, (Ps. xvi. 11.) Now as it is life eternal truly to know God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Tit. iii. 5,) even so also St Paul declareth that, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power : when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," (2 Thess. i. 7-10.) We see here, the vast difference that Christ will make in that day between the regenerate and the unregenerate, between the humble and thankful and the true recipients of the gospel, and the non-recipients and the neglecters of the gospel and of His great salvation. For whilst the regenerate are admitted into the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore, (Ps. xvi. 11,) the unregenerate who slighted the gospel, and who made light of the mercy of God, are justly shut out from the presence of Him, whose favour whilst on earth they disregarded, and whose children they hated and persecuted, derided and cruelly tormented. Nor will the unregenerate ever forget that they have lost God and Christ and the eternal Spirit, and that they have lost the society of that blessed assembly, of that holy throng, of that countless multitude arrayed in white, brighter than the meridian sun, who have washed their robes and made them white in the

blood of the Lamb ; and that they have lost the society of an innumerable company of angels : but their greatest loss is, that they have lost God the Father of glory, Christ the splendour and the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and the blessed Spirit the eternal Comforter. And when the unregenerate reflect, as they needs must, upon the greatness and the infinity of their loss ; and when they reflect how they treated the long-suffering and patience of God ; when they reflect, how they hardened their hearts, notwithstanding that God invited them to repent and turn to Him and seek forgiveness from Him and their happiness in Him ; when they reflect how Jesus Christ took upon Him human nature and died for lost sinners, and in His own Word offered to them eternal salvation, if they would repent and believe in Him, (John vi. 37, 39, 40 ;) and when the unregenerate reflect, how God bore with them with much patience and long-suffering, but that after all the goodness and forbearance of God, they continued obdurate and slighted the mercy of God, rejected His gospel, and obstinately persevered in hardness of heart, impenitence, and unbelief, until they were summoned by death to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, oh ! how will the consideration of these things torment the unregenerate who, having died impenitent, are sentenced to eternal banishment from the presence of God ! Never will the unregenerate forget that they have lost heaven. Reader, blessed be God, this is not the case with thee yet ; for if even thou art not as yet regenerated, yet thou art alive, and art not shut up with the devil and his angels for ever, (Matt. xxv. 41.) But yet, if thou diest unregenerate (which may God of His infinite mercy prevent !) there can be no hope for thee, for Christ himself hath said, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, or from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John iii. 3.) Therefore, dear reader,



if thou hast not the witness within thee that thou art born of God, then lose no time, but pray earnestly and indefatigably and unceasingly unto the Lord, and say, "God be merciful unto me a sinner. May it please Thee to save me by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Blessed Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. May it please Thee to make me Thy child by adoption and grace. Grant that I may be born again of incorruptible seed by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, for Christ's sake.—Amen." In this manner, pray continually, and wait on the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. Now as it must be clear to every man, that no one can see the things of this world and the beauties of the visible creation unless he be born naturally, even so it is equally true and in accordance with Scripture to state that the merely natural man cannot understand the mystery of the gospel—the mystery of Christ, (Eph. vi. 19.) For St Paul saith, "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And these words are in accordance with the declaration of Christ in John iii.

3. Also St Paul declareth, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." But although the Jews required a sign, and stumbled at the preaching of Christ, and although the Greeks, who sought after carnal wisdom, denounced the "glorious gospel of the blessed God" to be foolishness, St Paul declareth that the gospel in reality is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world was, (1 Cor. ii. 7;) and St Paul saith, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," (1 Cor. i. 23, 24.) For the mysteries of the glorious gospel of Christ are hidden judicially from the proud, and impenitent, and self-righteous; but the glories and mysteries of the gospel are revealed to the broken-hearted, to the humble and meek; for "the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit," (Ps. xxxiv. 18.) Also the psalmist saith, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, [that is, that fear to offend Him,] upon them that hope in his mercy," (Ps. xxxiii. 18.) As he saith also in another Psalm, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy," (Ps. cxlvii. 11.) For there is a great difference between the proud man, and the humble man. For the proud man doth not believe that he is a lost sinner, neither doth he believe that he meriteth and deserveth eternal misery, nor doth he believe that he must be lost for ever, and endure the bitter pains of eternal death, (which is called in Scripture the second death, Rev. xx. 14,) unless he is saved freely and fully by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom. iii. 24;) but he imagineth that he can merit something at the hands of God besides eternal death: thus it is, that the proud imagine a lie. But now, in respect of the humble man, the case with him is quite the reverse of that which I have now stated. For the humble man believeth, according to Scripture, (Rom. iii. 10-20,) that he is a lost sinner, and that, as it respects himself, he meriteth and deserveth eternal death, and everlasting banishment from the presence of God; and the humble man believeth that, unless he is saved by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom. iii. 24,) he must be lost for ever. But the humble man prayeth for mercy, and grace, and salvation, and he prayeth to God that he might be born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of

God, which liveth and abideth for ever; and the Lord, in the greatness of His mercy, heareth his prayer, and saveth the humble sinner by the washing of regeneration and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Titus iii. 5.) But although the humble soul is regenerated, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, (Gal. vi. 15,) and although he is a partaker of the divine nature, and loveth God supremely, and loveth the saints and the gospel, and exerciseth himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men, and laboureth to perfect holiness in the fear of God, (2 Cor. vii. 1,) yet, doth he not ascribe anything to himself, neither doth he trust in himself, (2 Cor. i. 9;) but his faith and hope is in God, (1 Pet. i. 21.) But now, in respect of the proud man, the Scripture saith, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord," (Prov. xvi. 5;) also, "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin," (Prov. xxi. 4.) Amongst seven things which are an abomination to the Lord, the Scripture setteth forth first, "A proud look," (Prov. vi. 17;) also the psalmist saith, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts," (Ps. x. 4.) And if we come to consider diligently the causes of the rejection of the gospel in the present day by such vast multitudes, and the cruelty of the popedom and of the papal inquisition in time past, and of the idolatry and blasphemous doctrines of the Papists, Pelagians, and Socinians of the present day, we shall find that it is to be attributed principally to pride, ignorance, hardness of heart, covetousness, carnality, and infidelity; and, in consequence of the neglect of prayer, and of reading the Holy Scriptures, these evils are increased. For if men will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead, (Luke xvi. 31.) But what saith the Scripture? "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an

oven : and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts," (Mal. iv. 1.) But whilst the prophet Malachi denounceth the terrible vengeance and the just judgment of God against the proud and impenitent, he comforteth the Church, which is composed of the regenerate, the humble, and meek, and of all those that fear God, and believe in Jesus Christ, and hope in His mercy, (Ps. cxlvii. 11,) saying unto them, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," (Mal. iv. 2.) For the Scripture saith, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord ; that walketh in his ways," (Ps. cxlviii. 1.) Also Solomon saith, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," (Prov. ix. 10 ;) and, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil : pride, arrogancy, and the evil way, do I hate," (Prov. viii. 13.) And the psalmist saith, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," (Ps. ciii. 13.) And Job also declareth that the fear of God, which he calleth wisdom, far excelleth all human riches and treasures, (see Job xxviii. 12-28.) And, after enumerating all that is valuable and precious in the estimation of the natural man, he declareth the infinite superiority of wisdom—that is, the fear of God—to all these things. And unto man God hath said, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Humble souls walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. For they, being regenerated, do trust in Christ alone. And inasmuch as Christ hath now once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and inasmuch as Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, (Heb. ix. 26, 28,) even so we believe, according to the Scriptures, that Christ, by His precious blood, by His eternal merit, and by His unsearchable riches, (Eph. iii. 8,) hath merited that the



mercy of the Lord should endure for ever towards all and each one of the regenerate, and towards all them that believe in Him, (John vi. 39, 40, x. 28.) Wherefore the Church of the first-born do ascribe all honour, and praise, and might, and majesty, and glory, and dominion, unto God and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the Church of the New Testament, which is the universal assembly of the regenerate, do sing the same eternal song; for we read that, when the Lamb had taken the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, that the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth," (Rev. v. 7-10.) Also St John declareth that he "beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." St Paul declareth that, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God is made known by the Church: accordingly, we find the angels praising God in ecstasies of joy unknown, on account of the salvation of the Church by God and the Lamb; for



St John saith in Rev. v., "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The salvation of the Church of God by Jesus Christ is the greatest, the most admirable, and the most amazing of all the works of God. And to us it is infinitely interesting. It is a cause of astonishment, and praise, and increase of joy to the angels, that God was manifest in the flesh. But especially is it a matter of constant thankfulness, praise, gratitude, and love to God in those who are saved by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; for St Paul saith, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;" and this also is the language and the feeling of all the regenerate towards Christ, although at times, on account of the manifold sorrows, persecutions, afflictions, and tribulations which the regenerate have to endure, and on account of the malice, ferocity, deceit, and fury of the devil, who, like a roaring lion, more or less continually worrieth the sheep of Christ, they are in heaviness through these things, and through manifold temptations; but still, the regenerate confide in God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, (Jude 21,) who shall also confirm the Church unto the end, in order that the regenerate might be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; for God is faithful by whom they were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, (1 Cor. i. 9.) Christ hath declared that in this world the regenerate shall have tribulation; but He comforteth the regenerate, saying unto them, "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," (John xvi. 33.) For St Paul declareth

that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, (2 Tim. iii. 12 ;) and to this very day the regenerate, who are followers of the Lamb, do find the words of the blessed apostle St Paul verified in their own experience, whilst passing through this present evil world, (Gal. i. 4,) from which they shall be delivered. But now the regenerate find the words of St Paul fulfilled, where he also saith, "But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now," (Gal. iv. 29 ;) for, even unto this present day, some of the regenerate have to endure trials of cruel mockings, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. But still they—that is, the regenerate—are all of them the children of God ; for St John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, (John xxi. 20,) speaking in reference to the regenerate, saith, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," (1 John iii. 1–3.) Christ hath, as it were, set up His throne, and erected His kingdom of grace, in the hearts of all His saints, which are the regenerate, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by giving them the Holy Ghost, and by sanctifying their wills, and enlightening the eyes of their understanding. He hath, through the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in the regenerate, enabled them to see His great salvation, and to know the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (Eph. i. 18, 19.) And so, by unveiling and manifesting His own glorious and infinite perfections, He hath enthroned Himself in the hearts of the regenerate, so that they see light in

God's light, (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) For the regenerate, which are truly so, do form the Church of Christ in reality, and these persons are dead to the world and to all its vanities; and when they see and behold with the eyes of their understandings, and when they consider, ponder upon, and meditate upon, the glories of Immanuel, all earthly things vanish from the minds of the regenerate, and Christ is all and in all; and the regenerate, being filled with admiration, love, and praise, do exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee?" This is the language and the feeling of the regenerate towards Christ; and Christ also, speaking in reference to His Church, which are the regenerate, saith, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." The true Church is the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven on earth; for Christ, speaking of the Church, saith, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." By the ten virgins here spoken of in this parable, we believe and understand our Saviour to mean the Church of God, consisting of those who profess the holy, and spiritual, and heavenly, and pure religion of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. We believe that Christ here includeth both the regenerate, and the unregenerate members of the visible Church: Christ here includeth both the internal members, and the external members of the Church. By the five wise virgins, we believe that Christ meaneth all those persons which are regenerated—that is, born of God, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus, (Gal. vi. 15.)—those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, (Heb. vi. 18.) By the five wise virgins here spoken of by Jesus Christ, we believe they are those persons in the Church who have been made wise unto salvation through faith, which is Christ Jesus, (2

Tim. iii. 15;) those persons, who have been saved by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Titus iii. 5;) those persons, who are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, (1 Cor. vi. 11;) they are those humble souls whose hearts are filled with pleasing wonder, praise, and love to Jesus Christ; they are those meek, lowly, spiritual, regenerate, and humble souls, who count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, (Phil. iii. 8;) they are those whom the Son has made free indeed; they are those whom the God of glory, the Father of mercies, and the eternal Father of glory hath made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: those, whom He hath delivered from the power of darkness, and hath translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, (Col. i. 12, 13.) They are those, who out of gratitude to God, do strive to please Him, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God, (2 Cor. vii. 1.) They are those regenerate souls, the language of whose heart is expressed in these words—"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name: bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction; and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies," (Ps. ciii. 1-4.) They are those regenerate souls in the Church of Christ, who, although they pass through great tribulation, and are sometimes so troubled that they cannot speak, (Ps. lxxvii. 4,) for oftentimes the regenerate are assaulted by the cruel, powerful, and furious attacks of Satan and his numerous emissaries, visible and invisible: yet the regenerate, being supported by the power of Christ, do gird the gospel armour on, and resist Satan, steadfast in the faith; and after passing through very great tribulations, ultimately they are made more than conquerors



through Him that loved them. St Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, applieth that passage of Scripture taken out of Ps. xlv. 22, to the regenerate, as it is written, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," (Rom. viii. 36.) But, though the regenerate may be sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, (Ps. xlv. 19,) and although the sorrows of death may compass the regenerate, and although the pains of hell may get hold of the regenerate, (Ps. cxvi. 3,) and although the fierce, powerful, formidable, and malicious powers of darkness may furiously assault the regenerate, yet they cannot destroy, although they greatly distress, terrify, and worry the regenerate; and although God himself may chasten the regenerate very sore, yet God doth not give them over unto death, (Ps. cxviii. 18;) and, therefore, the language of the regenerate after that the Lord has delivered them, and lifted upon them the light of His face, and after that they have sustained great conflicts with the insulting and malicious powers of darkness: the language, I say, of the heart of each one of the regenerate is this—"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," (Ps. cxvi. 1-7.) It is very evident, according to Scripture, that Satan hath great power in this world. For Christ himself hath declared, that Satan is the prince of this world, (John xiv. 30.) St Paul calleth him "the god of this world," (2 Cor. iv. 4,) and "the prince of the power of the air," (Eph.



ii. 2.) St James exhorteth men to resist the devil, (James iv. 7.) St Peter saith that the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, (1 Pet. v. 8.) But although the devil hath great power and greater wrath, (Rev. xii. 12,) yet, he hath not supreme power; the infinite and supreme power appertaineth to Jesus Christ, (Matt. xxviii. 18.) Isaac Watts describeth the feeling of a regenerate man, after a sore conflict with the powers of darkness—

“Great were my fears; my foes were great;  
 Much was their strength, and more their rage;  
 But Christ, my Lord, is conqueror still,  
 In all the wars that devils wage.”

Now, as it respecteth the regenerate, nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, (Rom. viii.) And notwithstanding all they have to endure here, they love God supremely. And the language and the feeling of the heart of the regenerate man is well expressed and described in these words,—“I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together,” (Ps. xxxiv. 1-3.) I conclude, then, that by the five wise virgins, Christ meaneth the regenerate, who, having felt themselves ready to perish, (Isa. xxvii,) have fled to the Lord Jesus Christ, and found regeneration and salvation in Him. And even now, in this world, although they have not seen Him, yet believing in Him they rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and how much more will the regenerate rejoice and welcome Him with heavenly raptures, with songs of praise, and eternal hallelujahs when He shall appear; for then, they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is, (1 John iii. 2;) and by Him they shall be introduced and welcomed into the heavenly Jerusalem, the city which hath foundations,

whose builder and maker is God. In that bright celestial city the regenerate shall praise God, and the Lamb, and the eternal Spirit throughout the countless ages of eternity. The Scripture saith in relation to the regenerate, that the regenerate shall be like Him, that is, Christ. They shall have an incorruptible and an immortal body, and although the regenerate in this world do pass through great tribulation, yet it is said with truth of the regenerate that—

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| “ When they once are enter’d there, |                |
| Their mourning days are o’er ;      | Isa. lx. 20.   |
| Pain, and sin, and want, and care,  | Rev. xxi. 4.   |
| And sighing is no more.             | Isa. xxxv. 5.  |
| Subject then to no decay,           | 1 Cor. xv. 53. |
| Heavenly bodies they put on ;       | 1 Cor. xv. 49. |
| Swifter than the lightning’s ray,   |                |
| And brighter than the sun.          |                |

“ But their greatest happiness,  
    Their highest joy, shall be  
God their Saviour to possess,  
    To know, and love, and see.  
With the beatific sight,  
    Glorious ecstasy is given ;  
This is their supreme delight,  
    And makes a heaven of heaven.”

Having endeavoured to explain according to Scripture who they are whom our Saviour representeth under the similitude of the five wise virgins, it remaineth that I should endeavour briefly to shew who they are whom our Saviour referreth to under the similitude of the five foolish virgins. First, then, I say they are those in the Church who, although they have been baptized with water and are external members of the Church, yet as they have never repented of their sins and believed on Christ, and as they have not been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, (Matt. iii. 11,) they are unregenerate, inasmuch as they have never yet as poor, lost, blind, miserable, and guilty sinners, really come to Jesus

Christ for salvation: therefore all those persons, whoever they are, whether rich or poor, high or low, learned or illiterate, are all unregenerate, and although they are external members, they are not inward members of the Church. For the inward members of the Church are united to Christ by faith and by the Spirit, and the inward members are one with Christ, and as Christ is, so are the regenerate in this world. The external members take the lamp of profession, but they do not seek all their happiness in God, but are satisfied if men speak well of them. Unto such persons, the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are applicable, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 44.) May God give us grace to examine ourselves to which we belong, whether we be regenerate or unregenerate. In the meantime, now, whilst we have the opportunity and the invitation, let us come with reverence and godly fear unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, (Heb. iv. 16.) Blessed be God for ever and ever, there are abundant invitations in the Holy Scriptures given unto men, and unto the chief of sinners, to draw near to God, and to seek His mercy and salvation in Christ. It is lamentable in the extreme, to think how many neglect the Scriptures and the great salvation of God. But let us remember that it is written, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil," (Exod. xxiii. 2.) The man who is shut out of the kingdom of God, is not excluded on account of the impenitence of millions of others, all of whom will be condemned except they repent, but on account of his own impenitence and his own unbelief. Therefore, O poor, lost sinner, make haste to Jesus Christ: the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. "Pray that thou mayest be born of God." May God save thee by the washing of

regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Titus iii. 5.) Search the Scriptures, (John v. 39.) May the Lord add His blessing to what has been herein written, for Christ's sake. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“Glory, honour, praise, and power,  
Be unto the Lamb for ever.

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